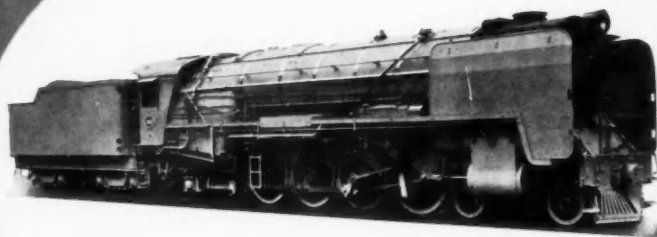


DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers



MADE IN BRITAIN FOR SOUTH AFRICA
*South African Railways' 15-F locomotive; built by the
North British Locomotive Co Ltd*

IN THIS ISSUE

1951 Festival Souvenirs

Nameplates

English tradition in pottery design

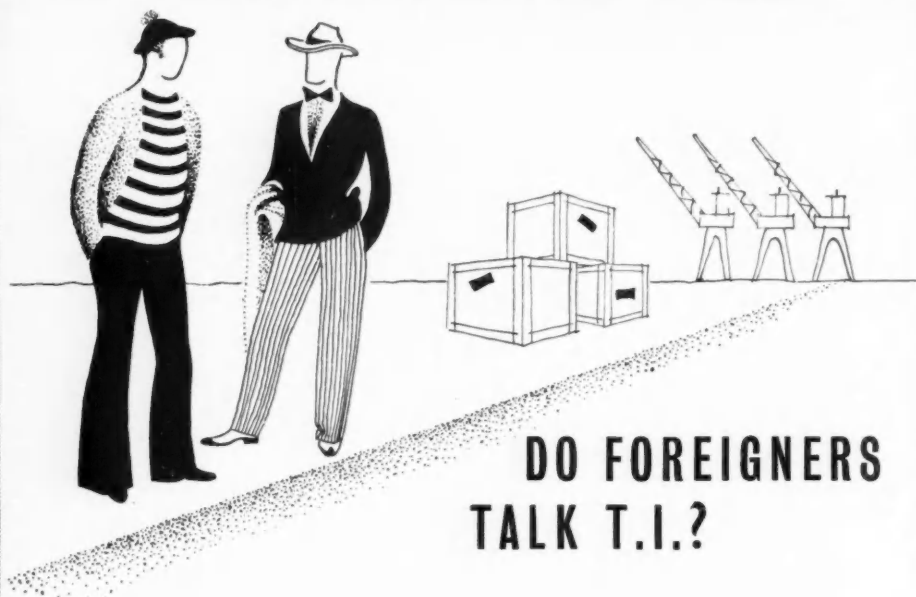
Trains by mass production

COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

NUMBER 22 : OCTOBER 1950

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS





DO FOREIGNERS TALK T.I.?

By foreigners we refer to all the live and likeable people with whom we do business for Britain abroad . . . and, in explaining that, we seem to have answered the question. For T.I. reached a record total last year of £12,750,000 in *direct* exports alone . . . and that in spite of difficulties which did not exist the year before.

When foreigners think of T.I., it may mean anything to them, from a microscopic coil of steel tubing for a highly technical purpose to a consignment of bus body components ready packed for quick assembly. When foreigners talk T.I. they are using what has become almost a universal language.

The letters T.I. mean Tube Investments Limited, of the Adelphi, London, W.C.2 (Trafalgar 5633). They also stand for the thirty producing companies of the co-ordinated T.I. group, makers of precision tubes, of bicycles and components, of wrought aluminium alloys, electrical appliances, pressure vessels, paints, road signs, metal furniture . . . and essential mechanical parts for a thousand and one things which everybody uses.



THE SURNAME OF A THOUSAND THINGS

DESIGN

A monthly journal for manufacturers and designers

ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND THE SCOTTISH COMMITTEE OF THE COUNCIL

NUMBER 22 : OCTOBER 1950

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: *South African 15-F locomotive built by the North British Locomotive Co Ltd for South African Railways*

EDITOR: Alec Davis EDITORIAL OFFICES: Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW1 Whitehall 6322

HALLMARK?

WE FLEW A kite in August. Now let us haul it in, have a look at it, patch the shot-holes and then set it flying again.

The response from readers shows that there is great interest in the subject. There seems to be almost a unanimity of opinion that some way of indicating what is considered a good standard of design should be tried ("many people like to be advised on questions of taste"), subject to safeguards ensuring that the scope is wide enough ("prevent it getting into the hands of any one coterie"). It is regarded as a legitimate extension of branded products whose quality is certified by a leading manufacturer, an industrial federation or a public institution. Manufacturers, it seems, would not be averse from some other sign of public approval to strive after, besides the incidence of popular spending ("a fair and reasonable system of hallmarking would surely be welcomed by any responsible manufacturer").

Against this it is argued that we are not ready for it: that the literary hallmark—*Book of the Month*, etc—is acceptable because children are at least taught to read: and that we must wait until a generation has been bred that has been taught at school also to look. ("Little can be done to correct the lack of critical appreciation in the present generation.") This argument is the quintessence of buck-passing.

In the compilation of the 1951 Stock List—an exercise that is primarily concerned with making information available to the designers of the 1951 exhibitions as to what are the best-designed products in a wide range of British industries—the question of what was a good general standard of industrial design came right to the front. Before you can have a hallmark you must have a standard, and the question of standard is also implicit in a broad and catholic exercise in design appreciation such as the Stock List—indeed, as soon as you venture beyond the sanction of personal taste and pass judgments of value that have a wider validity. We found that whereas you could not formulate an acceptable standard by slogan or other set of words, the widespread discussions and appraisals involved in the operation of the Stock List are imperceptibly establishing a standard by the accretion of thousands of value-judgments passed "about and around the actual goods."

There are some who maintain that there is no real basis for such judgments, that personal preference is everything and that one can judge only for oneself, not for other people. But standards of value have been established, and are continually being reassessed, in many different fields ranging from pure science to conduct and morals. The method employed is for large numbers of people, differing in outlook, to focus

their attention upon many separate appraisals of value. To quote an earlier DESIGN leader, it is illogical to refuse to co-operate in establishing a standard in design alone, when we habitually make judgments of value in other fields: it is a queer freak of the modern mind to leave aesthetic questions to each man to judge for himself alone ("I know what I like") when in morals the equivalent ("I do as I choose") is universally condemned.

Just as in morals we endeavour to do what we believe to be right, so in design appreciation we should learn to distinguish on occasion between what we like personally and what we believe to be good. To appreciate the reality and importance of this distinction is a bridge that must be crossed before we can begin. The establishment of a standard requires that as many people as possible should cross that bridge and address their minds sincerely to the business of appraisal and choice. The standard will emerge gradually as the result.

In compiling the 1951 Stock List we are engaging the attention of many people, over the widest possible field of art and industry, who do not come new to these problems, but have a long experience in the design of things for manufacture and use. The compass of the Stock List embraces all kinds of manufacturing industry and a wide variety of taste. We do not think there is one perfect design, nor one correct style of design. We are establishing that there can be many different variations to suit different tastes, but all good.

There are two dangers threatening: first, that such an operation should at its beginning be too esoteric, the personal taste of a clique or coterie, and, second, that if established permanently it should rapidly degenerate into a sterile academism. The best safeguard against both is the fullest publicity without reservation. For this reason we are especially glad that the Stock List is to be displayed as an open-access public information centre in the South Bank Exhibition, under the title of "Design Review."

Photographs of the latest well-designed products will, moreover, be added to it throughout the course of the exhibition.

It will be most interesting to see what suggestions are put forward for its future use. It may be that some of the great industrial towns will wish to see Design Review on tour in 1952.

M. H. T.

Readers' letters on the subject of a hallmark for good design appear on pp 25-6

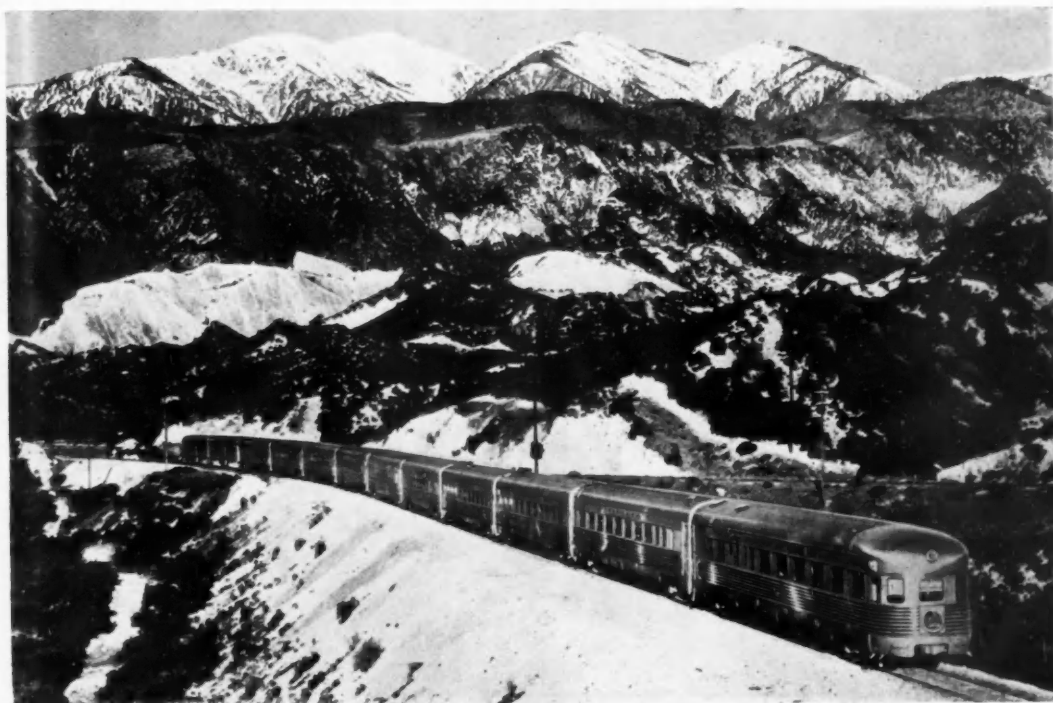
Market research—or guesswork?

THAT DESIGN in consumer-goods suffers from the absence of direct contact between manufacturers and consumers is a familiar argument, often emphasised by contrast with the conditions which prevailed before the Industrial Revolution. Then, the man who bought a chair or a clock or a pewter mug often knew personally the man who made it, and there was no middleman to interpret—or misinterpret—his needs.

A contrast could equally well be drawn between conditions in the consumer-goods industries and those which exist alongside them today, in many of the capital-goods industries. Here, the manufacturer frequently knows and deals direct with the users of his products; a leading maker of welding machines has been quoted in DESIGN as saying that the pace of design in his industry is set by the exacting demands of intelligent users. And the standard of design in these and in many other forms of industrial equipment is, undeniably, high (a Czech critic of British industrial design, with no reason for prejudice one way or the other, recently expressed the view that "the style and well-planned bodies of the mechanical implements" in this country are better than our pottery or textile design).

The recent Commercial Motor Show illustrated again, in a different way, the harmful influence which the middleman can have. The goods-carrying vehicles exhibited—especially the heavier ones—were superb engineering products, their appearance largely determined by functional considerations which maker and operator would alike appreciate. Many of the passenger coaches, on the other hand, were flashily pretentious—tawdry in their decoration of applied chrome strips even when the underlying shape was good. And in coaches, presumably, the standard of design is dictated by the wishes of the operator—a middleman who seeks, by guesswork or by imputing his own likes and dislikes to other people, to interpret the requirement of the ultimate user, the passenger.

Modern methods of market research, as an aid to the discovery of consumers' needs, have often been subjected to ridicule; yet they are used by many progressive firms. In these days of mass production the manufacturer can all too easily become obsessed by the many intricate problems of manufacturing and pay far too little attention to how his goods will be used by the actual consumer—who is still an individual although he may tend to be thought of in the mass as THE CONSUMER. Is it not true that in a mass-production age the retailer, as the link between manufacturer and consumer, has a special responsibility?



El Capitan of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad is typical of the complete train which cannot be broken up into units. It is a single conception—if the end car is left off it looks like an ocean liner without a stern. The absence of the downswep bands and similar clichés beloved by many present-day coach and locomotive builders is refreshing

DESIGN POLICY IN ACTION: 6

TRAINS BY MASS PRODUCTION

by Harold Wyatt

"ALL THE MAILS and first-class carriages are furnished with spring buffers; the insides are lined with drab cloth, and the cushions properly stuffed with horsehair; the seats are separated by elbows, by which each passenger gets his full share of room."

This grim picture which Whishaw gives of a Liverpool and Manchester Railway passenger coach of 1840 is in contrast with many of the products of the modern coach builder.

In America the stage-coach tradition of compartment rolling-stock, still so closely followed in England, was broken very early in railway history and

saloon coaches became general. It was Pullman who first realised the commercial possibilities of an improvement in standards of day and night travel and thus, alone among railwaymen, made his name a household word in the English language; a criterion of fabulous comfort equally understood by those who travelled in his cars and those who wistfully watched their passage. "Pullman-car comfort" is a phrase as apposite in 1950 as it was nearly a hundred years ago.

When another American, convinced that it costs no more to make a good article than a poor one, and that quality is as much a matter of appearance as of sound

TRAINS BY MASS PRODUCTION

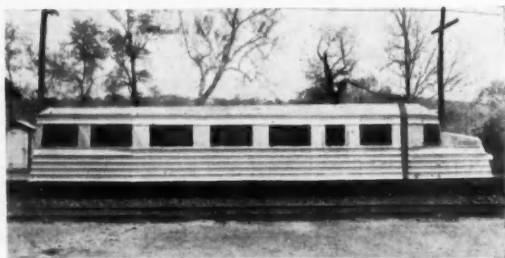
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constructional and engineering technique, enters the international field of rolling-stock construction, then the event cannot be ignored.

The Budd Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1912 by Edward Gowen Budd, at first concerned itself only with steel lorry-bodies, but during the first world war it built all-steel bodies for the Dodge cars which were then standard US army equipment.

From 1916 to 1931 Budd was closely associated with the development of all-steel motor-car parts. He held the French Michelin Company's licence to build steel disc wheels, was responsible for the body design of the Citroën front-wheel drive, chassisless, all-steel car; and had close links with firms in Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Sweden, as well as Morris at Oxford.

In 1928-29 Budd began to experiment with stainless steel, a material which had long impressed him by its strength when worked cold, its ductility, resistance to corrosion and high strength-weight ratio. He developed the *Shotweld* controlled welding process,



A Budd Vista Dome coach (above) for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. The all-glazed upper compartment, which seats 24 passengers and gives a complete view of the surrounding country, would be impossible in the United Kingdom where the height gauge is severely restricted

The 1932 Budd-Micheline rubber-tired railcar Lafayette. Here is no pointless styling but a logical expression of the car's structure and purpose. The form of corrugation used to stiffen light-gauge sheeting, the flexible joint between car and power unit, and the roof taper should be noted

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and in 1931 built a pioneer all-stainless-steel flying boat.

In 1931 also, Budd saw the Michelin rubber-tyred railcar in France, obtained a licence to build similar vehicles in America, and put his first Budd-Micheline into operation in January 1932. After he had built several others, including one for the Michelin company itself, production was abandoned because American coach specifications were too severe for the tyre load-capacities then available; but the railcars had aroused great interest, and they provided invaluable data for the *Pioneer Zephyr*, the first all-stainless-steel train ever built.

The *Pioneer Zephyr*, put into service in 1934, was a milestone. As a railway development it was fundamental; operating at 42 cents a mile, it earned—net—70 cents a mile, and paid for itself four times over within seven years. It marked the first step towards the goal which Budd had set himself in passenger coach design: a train which would be stronger and lighter than any other, with every feature of its equipment and decoration studied and treated as an integral part of the whole. He organised a design group and insisted that designs should be worked out, not for a single prototype, but on a mass-production basis, arguing "that a car or train can be truly tested only when it is put into the service for which it was built." This in itself was a revolutionary step in the building of rolling stock, and it saved years of expensive theoretical work.

Budd had his battles to fight, notably with the railway operating departments, who disliked trains which could not be broken up into units.* Arguing that "the public will pay if it is pleased; it won't patronise, at any price, if it isn't . . ." he set out to fight prejudice and to emphasise that increasing train capacity at the expense of passenger comfort was not the answer to road and air competition.

It is no criticism of Budd to say that he was fortunate in having a home market capable of absorbing his products. North American passenger coach standards are, thanks to the American Association of Railroads, uniform in the main: 476 railway companies operate some 36,500 standard units in the USA alone, while Canada has a further 5000 such vehicles in service, by far the greater proportion having been built by industry. In Britain, on the other hand, British Railways operate over 40,000 passenger vehicles, of which more than half came from

* "The doggoned observation car always had to be turned and tail-ended, nor could it be left behind in the yard. In fact, few operating men gave a damn about looks." *Don't kill the goose . . .* by E. J. W. Ragsdale (Budd, Philadelphia).



Inside the upper compartment of the Vista Dome coach shown on facing page. The massive treatment of the seats mars an otherwise excellent interior



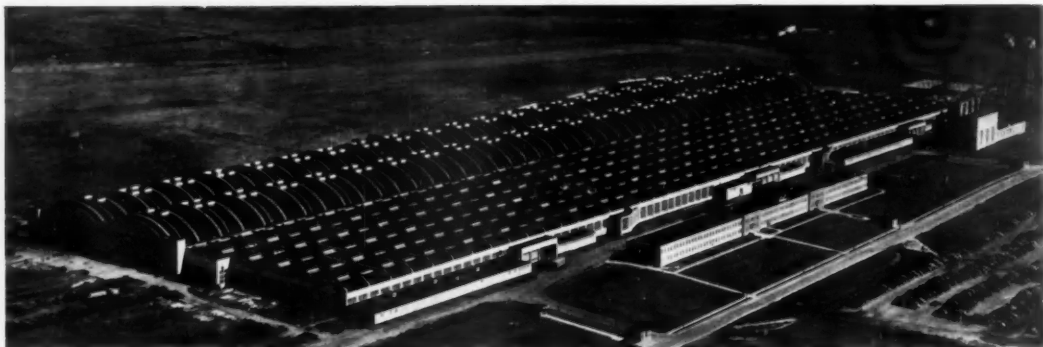
The seating standards of Budd coaches are closely allied to those of air liners. One wonders if the footrests and their attendant control slides, above, might not be irksome during a long journey. The double-berth Budd sleeper on the Burlington Exposition Flyer, below, is similar to many British Railways first-class sleepers, but the webbing cage suggests that the hazards of upper-berth travel are greater in the States than in this country. The Venetian blinds are a great improvement on spring blinds or heavy dust-catching curtains



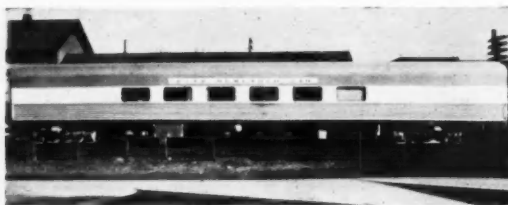
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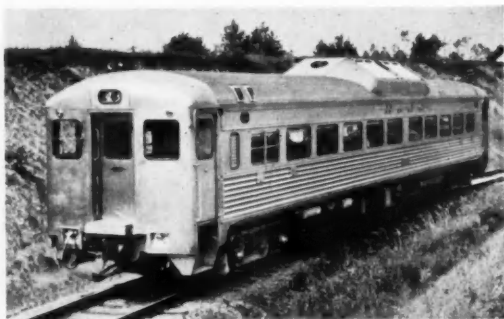
number 22



The Budd Red Lion works at Philadelphia produce railway coaches and lorry parts. The factory is in the same clean-cut tradition as the vehicles it turns out; it forms convincing testimony of the company's design-consciousness



The Budd research car is a clean-cut vehicle built to enable the firm's engineers to obtain working data under operating conditions. The only blemish on its appearance is the expanded sans-serif lettering, whose thick and thin strokes do not aid legibility



The 1950 83 m.p.h. Budd RDC-1 railcar seats 90 passengers. It is powered by two 275 h.p. diesel engines mounted under the floor, while the blister midway along the roof houses engine radiators and exhaust ports. The car is 85 feet long and weighs 53 American tons (equivalent to about 40 British tons). The problem of designing powered vehicles to operate either independently or coupled in multiples as a train is a difficult one; the end treatment of this new railcar is perhaps the least successful of the Budd designs

* In 1948, of 1243 new coaches put into service, 753 were built by British Railways. (BTC Report and Accounts for 1948.)

TRAINS BY MASS PRODUCTION

continued

railway-owned shops.* Again, there are 11 different rail gauges in use throughout the world, and it is chiefly for overseas railways, amidst this welter of dimensions, that British locomotive and coach builders have built their products and their reputations.

Budd is credited with having once said: "I make it a practice to ask the impossible of one of my people daily, and quite often they do it." But, if the impossible is asked, the company makes every effort to provide the right environment in which to achieve it. Throughout its activities runs the thread of consistent design-consciousness—from the Red Lion works at Philadelphia, in which its coaches are built, to the booklets and press announcements advertising its products to the world. It is difficult to imagine anything but good design coming out of the factory, or anything but the most precise observations and calculations being undertaken in the Budd Research Car; and there are about Budd vehicles none of the down-swept bands or self-conscious blisters and bulges which many critics associate with American "streamlining."

At first this characteristic of Budd design may be surprising, but it becomes understandable when one reads the following explanation by the late Col. Ragsdale, Budd's chief engineer: "Travel is the only commodity which cannot be oversold. The appetite for food can be satisfied; that for travel is only increased by more travel. But like any commodity, it has to be merchandised and the goods must be made attractive. You hire an architect for a \$15,000 house. Why shouldn't you hire the very best one available for a million-dollar train? Of course you should, and that is what we do now. Funny, that that should have ever been thought to be a novel idea. . . ."

English tradition in pottery design

By John Thomas, M A, Ph D *

WHAT IS MEANT by design in pottery? In asking this question at the beginning I realise that I may raise many hares. I am not an artist nor an industrial designer. If I do not please any school of artists nor offend any industrial designers by plunging into so controversial a subject, at least I shall clarify my own views as a layman who has devoted three decades of his life to research into the economic development of the Potteries. My studies were not confined to the study of documents. They brought me into contact with pottery manufacturers, ceramic artists, chemists, designers, art teachers and ceramic connoisseurs. I visited almost all the main pottery factories concentrated in North Staffordshire and those scattered as far afield as London, Derby, Lancashire, Dorset, Bristol and Worcester. I was privileged also to visit the most famous potteries in Sweden, Denmark,

Holland, France, USA and USSR. I belong to no particular school of design and therefore have no axe to grind.

When thinking of design in pottery, I consider that design constitutes at least three main elements:

- 1: *Shape or form*
- 2: *Decoration or ornamentation marked or inscribed on the object shaped or formed*
- 3: *More complex ornamentation with the use of colour as a medium of decoration.*

Let us examine these three elements :

Shape or form

The delightful designs in pottery shown in Figure 1 depend solely on their shape or form; undecorated by any pattern, motif or ornamentation.

When fired all pottery ware has some colour, but in isolating shape or form as a primary element in design, I ignore colour; in this context, I refer to the shape or form of pottery as it could be felt by a blind person. Shape or form in this sense is the mass or the outline of the ceramic ware—not as a flat outline sketch on paper, but as an outline in space to be apprehended as a solid body.

The shape of a piece of pottery, when fired, depends on the structure or chemical composition of the body of the ware. Its shape may be perfect when it leaves the thrower, the turner, or the caster, through whose hands it has passed in the "green" state; but the resulting ware may be warped, twisted, cracked or totally collapsed when it is fired. What promises to be a well-designed piece of pottery when it leaves the thrower may become an ugly shape either through wrong firing or through faulty mixing of ingredients

* Dr Thomas, a former member of the National Council of the Pottery Industry, has written, broadcast and lectured on the Industrial Revolution in the Staffordshire Potteries. For his lecture to the Royal Society of Arts on this subject, he was awarded the Society's Silver Medal.



1: Wedgwood tableware designed in the eighteenth century and still in production.
(At top of page: a fluted Wedgwood Jasper vase of the eighteenth century, showing the technical skill achieved at that time)



2: INCISED DECORATION. *A Doulton stoneware vase is carved by the artist, Vera Huggins*



3: RAISED DECORATION. *The Lichfield vase by Wedgwood, presented to H.M. the Queen at Lichfield Cathedral in 1946. Shape designed by Victor Skellern, FSIA, ARCA; modelled motifs by Arnold Machin, ARA; glaze by Norman Wilson*

ENGLISH TRADITION IN POTTERY DESIGN *continued*

in the body. The perfect shapes which Josiah Wedgwood produced in his vases and in his other ornamental wares were a tribute to his skill as a ceramic chemist in mixing his ingredients—clays, ground stones, earth and oxides; he therefore had less failures and rejects after firing wares. They kept their shape during all the processes of manufacture.

Design in pottery begins with shape. For some wares, nothing need be added to a well-designed shape to make it a finer object of aesthetic appeal. When beauty is dependent solely on shape, then design *ends* there. But there are other wares that require something more if they are to be regarded as well designed. Their quality is enhanced by the addition of some ornamentation, slightly modifying their appearance. This brings us to our second element in design.

Decoration or ornamentation

Etymologically, the words "decoration" and "ornament" are both connected with the idea of beautifying an object. As dress can decorate the shape of the human figure, so decoration or ornament can enhance a well-designed shape in pottery.

The decoration on the surface of the shaped body may be simple marks scraped or scratched, as in (2), or may be impressed *motifs* or raised figures (3). Geometrical designs—circles, triangles, squares—contribute to these simple ornamental elements of design (4).

This simple, plain, uncoloured decoration is quite different from the third element in design:



4: GEOMETRICAL ORNAMENT. *Wedgwood vases designed by Keith Murray. Traditional methods of throwing and turning were used to achieve these modern forms*



5: COLOURED SLIPWARE DECORATION. Dish by Thomas Toft (seventeenth century)

More complex ornamentation, with colour

This type of design is so much in use in pottery manufacture—as it has been since the early eighteenth century in this country and much earlier elsewhere, in Chinese porcelain in particular—that often when thinking of design in pottery we think only of this third element, to the exclusion of shape.

Such coloured decoration is used in the celebrated slip ware of Thomas Toft (5), as in various Wedgwood wares. One colour, often fixed in the shaped ware, forms a background to the outline of the added coloured decoration—the superimposed design, in this third sense. Black motifs look well against a white background (6) or white against a black background (7). Wedgwood became famous for his white jasper ornamentation on blue or green background. His rivals cashed-in on the sales value of this design.

The use of copperplate transfers—one-colour designs on tissue paper, superimposed on underglaze biscuit ware and at times on glaze fired ware—popularised the use of coloured decoration. Excellent examples were produced in the eighteenth century, from the factories of Adams, Minton, Spode, Wedgwood and others (9).

Hand painting of landscape scenes, historical incidents and portraits is a more costly method of decoration. The floral designs, so popular on Continental and Chinese porcelain, and revived in Worcester, Derby and on Nantgarw and Swansea porcelain, as well as on earthenware pottery of North Staffordshire (10), are also in this category.

continued overleaf



6: BLACK ON WHITE. Late eighteenth-century sauce tureen in cream-coloured earthenware, by Wedgwood (Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown copyright)



7: WHITE ON BLACK. Copy of the Portland vase in black Jasper ware with white cameo reliefs made by Josiah Wedgwood, FRS, in 1790



8: MULTICOLOUR PRINTED DECORATION. Spode's Audley pattern (period 1805)



9: MONOCHROME PRINTED DECORATION. *Dish with dark blue pattern (Floors, Roxburghshire, landscape) by Adams of Tunstall*

Lithographic processes using multi-colour transfers popularised and cheapened coloured decoration during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Portraits, landscapes and floral patterns are all reproduced by these processes (8).

When pottery design is contemplated by artists, designers and ceramic connoisseurs, they think of the combined effect of the three factors discussed above. Sometimes the shape of the object is the dominant

feature, with the decoration ancillary to it. In other wares, the ornamentation is the outstanding feature; it may be the subtlety, contrast, even clash of colour, and not the shape that catches the eye. In others again it may be the harmonious combination of shape and colour that appeals.

A concluding article by Dr Thomas dealing with trends in pottery design, past and present, will be published in next month's issue.



10: HAND-PAINTING. *Staffordshire lustre ware of the early nineteenth century. (Illustration courtesy Antique Dealer and Collectors' Guide; examples in the possession of Drury and Drury)*

Simplification in industry

Fewer designs—and better design—would increase the efficiency of British industry

"TO BE FULLY EFFECTIVE a policy of simplification must begin at the design stage. Every designer, naturally, wishes to express himself in his work and to make his work different from that of others. Yet he should employ standard components and fittings wherever possible." "Where simplification is carried out on the component, equipment or process, the end product and the consumer's freedom of choice are alike unaffected."

These quotations are from a report issued by the Anglo-American Council on Productivity—the only report in this series, so far, devoted entirely to British practice. A year ago, a group appointed by that Council investigated, and reported on, simplification in industry in the USA. Since then, its members have had many discussions with British industry, and have found so many developments worth recording that they have now produced a second report.*

The group are convinced that there are few, if any, firms which cannot benefit from simplification, whether applied to materials, equipment, components or final products. Inaccurate costing is said to be encouraging the production of a needlessly wide variety of goods in individual firms. It appears that many "small-run" lines are receiving a hidden subsidy from the main products. More accurate costing, reflected in selling prices, would be the most powerful stimulus towards unnecessary variety. That the variety of models really is unnecessary is illustrated by the experience of, for example, the brassfounding industry, which finds that its ship-builder customers frequently order special fittings when a perfectly adequate standard line is available, despite the fact that these fittings will be completely hidden when they are installed, and their external appearance is of no importance.

Costs are too often ignored when salesmen press for additional lines or products as a means of expanding sales. New lines are often added to a catalogue because salesmen report that a competitor is offering such a product—incidentally, a method of working which is hardly likely to produce the highest standard

of design. Sales and production policies must be integrated, the report urges; and they must become a concern of top management.

The group quotes examples of simplification from industries producing a wide range of products, from locomotives to linoleum. Some of the most encouraging are summarised below:

AIRCRAFT: Technical progress is so rapid that the danger of retarding development through over-hasty standardisation is particularly important here. Nevertheless, through thorough consultation within the industry and with ancillary industries a high degree of standardisation of components has been reached: the Society of British Aircraft Constructors has even been able to own and lend out moulding tools for standard plastic parts.

BUSES: A recent agreement to standardise chassis dimensions on certain public service vehicles will facilitate interchangeability of bodies.

COTTON TEXTILES: Variety of finish, colour and style should not be limited, but in such items as yarn count a considerable reduction of variety could be made without adversely affecting the end-product.

GAS COOKERS: One firm has reduced its range of cookers from 33 different types to one type only, with four hot-plate arrangements as the only variants. The results can be summarised in this way:

Price: 32% less

Production: 165% more

Workers employed: 32% more

Average earnings: 15% more.

Other results brought about by this drastic reduction in the number of models include improved flow, simpler assembly operations, better utilisation of factory space, economies in raw-materials purchasing, more rapid conversion of raw material to saleable product, and quicker stock-turnover.

It is difficult to estimate the reduction in price, to the consumer, of products which have been standardised for a number of years and throughout an industry. The group quotes an estimate that roller chains, used for machine drives in many industries, would cost four times as much as they do, but for standardisation.

S. K. L.

* *Simplification in British Industry*, Anglo-American Council on Productivity, 1s. The first report was *Simplification in Industry*, 1s.



NEWS OF NEW PRODUCTS

Design in toys, furniture, hospital and workshop equipment

BUILDING IN PLASTICS

The dizzy structure illustrated above is built up from Arch-Rite building toys, designed and made by Play-Rite Nursery Toys, Dewsbury; moulded in Beetle powder. Light weight, colour-fastness and cleanliness make this a logical use of plastics. The 16-piece box shown sells for 7s 9d including tax; 8 pieces, 3s 11d.

FOR INDOORS OR OUT

As spare in line as a drawn bow, the new nesting seat by Ernest Race Ltd is almost as dependent on modern manufacturing methods as a jet 'plane. Its frame is of welded steel rods, rust-proofed and enamelled; the seat itself is of formed plywood, waterproofed and finished in an air-drying synthetic enamel, in a colour that contrasts with the stove-enamelling of the frame.

Known as the *Antelope*, this design by Ernest Race, FSIA, is made in a single-seat version as well as the two-seater illustrated, right. It is equally suitable for indoor or outdoor use.

Women's magazines and national newspapers have given considerable

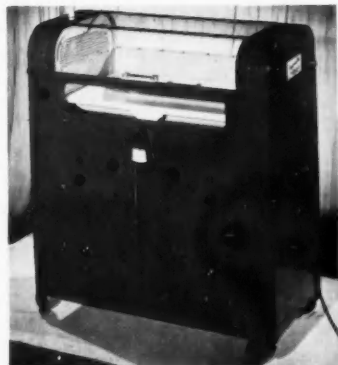
publicity to another recent Race production, the Ladies' Chair—a low chair, comfortably upholstered but armless, giving its occupant unlimited elbow-room so that she can sew or knit in comfort. The chair has been designed to stack—which renders it exempt from purchase tax and enables it to be sold at a very reasonable price. Although, constructionally, it follows the Race "tradition" of being non-traditional, it is more conventional in appearance than some of the firm's designs, and as a result it is selling successfully to (and through) retailers who in the past have firmly said "No" to what they regarded as modern furniture. It may help to lead them gently towards a less conservative design policy.



DESIGN COMES TO THE AID OF THE QUADS

Two stages in the development of a combined baby-incubator and oxygen tent, the first of its kind to be made in Britain, are illustrated here. The later model—shown, on right, with one of London's new quads in it—incorporates several improvements. It was to this model that Lord Latham referred when (as widely quoted in the daily Press) "he paid special tribute to the speed with which the oxygen incubators were supplied" for the quads.

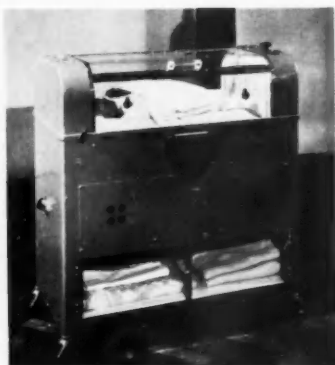
Most interesting feature is the transparent plastic hinged lid, which enables the nurse to attend to the infant without disturbing the atmosphere in the tent compartment. This part has been most altered in development—for three good reasons: first, to eliminate the side join and so give an uninterrupted view of the baby; second, to enable the lid to be opened at the top instead of the side so that the smallest possible amount of oxygen (heavier than air) escapes; third,



to reduce the height of the incubator by three or four inches and bring the baby to the most convenient level for lifting.

The number of controls has been considerably reduced in the later model. On-off switches have been substituted for "tuning" knobs, and the thermostat and its controls incorporated in one unit. An alarm bell beneath the incubator gives immediate warning of an electricity failure.

The lower part of the cabinet forms a



heated cupboard, for storing the infant's accessories; in the later model, this has transparent doors.

Economy in manufacture has been achieved not only through the simpler shape of the plastic canopy, but by eliminating the corner seams in the cabinet and making it from a single piece of sheet aluminium, folded, with one join only—at the back.

The unit was designed and manufactured by Oxyginaire Ltd.

LENSES IN TRANSPLEX

The very small components used in many present-day products are liable to cause eyestrain when the worker has to look at them without any aid to his natural vision. A magnifying lens, even though the degree of magnification is quite low, can remedy this state of affairs; and this is the purpose of the industrial inspection lens shown below, with its weighted feet which enable it to be offset to a position directly above the work to be inspected. It has been

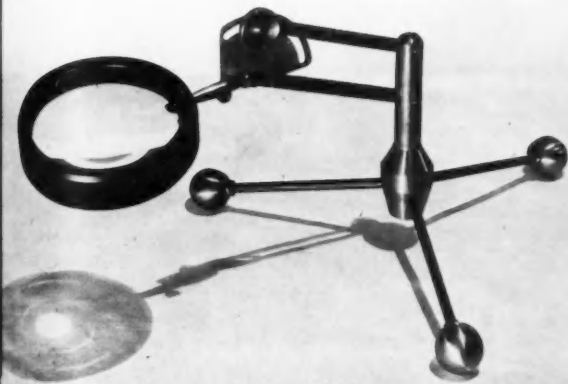
developed by Allied Instrument Manufacturers Ltd.

The material used for the lens proper is ICI's *Transpex* acrylic optical resin, cast in an accurately worked glass mould to produce a corrected aspherical lens of a diameter which allows binocular vision over a wide area.

The same type of material—half the weight of the corresponding glass lens—is being used also in industrial inspection lenses made by Engineering Developments (England) Ltd and by C. S. Pyser and Co Ltd.

INTRODUCING JOPO

This new manikin, made of PVC on a core of twisted iron wire, stands six inches high and costs half-a-crown. Apart from its appeal as a flexible and washable toy, it can be put to such varied uses as holding menu cards on a restaurant table or supporting showcards in a shop window. Designed by F. Schleich in the US Zone of Germany, it is being made in England by Kinver and Radov Ltd. There is a range of six colours.



Britain designs for the world

Railway carriages and motor buses, mostly designed for export, from the 1951 Stock List

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE many apparent differences between the vehicles used for rail and road traffic, their beginnings are common and are to be found in road transport practice of pre-Victorian years—in the horse-drawn coach, omnibus, brake and *char-à-bancs*.

Throughout the history of coachbuilding, more has been adapted than discarded. The modern British railway coach still largely follows the form of construction in vogue when timber was employed for all but working parts. There is a body, mounted on an underframe but forming a separate unit (horse-carriage practice again). During the early years of this century, steel underframes came into general use, preceded by the introduction of steel bogies. Next came the steel-panelled body on a wooden framework, and finally the all-steel coach, still in two super-imposed units.

The Pullman car is the sole British application on main-line railways of the American form of construction; at first wooden, then composite, and latterly all-steel, with the body, floor and underframe in one

piece. It influenced the design of our underground railway carriages, though many of our earliest models were of British design and construction.

The brightness and apparent spaciousness of these early cars, and of the surface stock that followed when existing steam railways were electrified during the early nineteen hundreds, commended them to contemporary travellers, as also did the cleanliness and speed of the new form of traction. The electric underground railways gained, in fact, a popularity among users which the diehard technical journals of the day scornfully denied.

Much the same sort of thing happened with the advent of long-distance road motor-coach services. It was believed in many quarters, and especially by the railway companies, that the cheapness of coach travel would be offset by the fact that an express coach took about twice as long from terminal to terminal as an express train. But the coach operators did not rely solely on cheapness; they went in for elaborate

continued on p 16



I: IRAQ: Air conditioned carriage (first- and second-class composite); by Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd

List

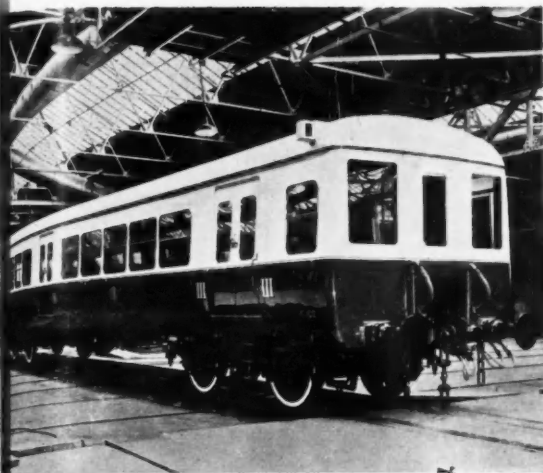
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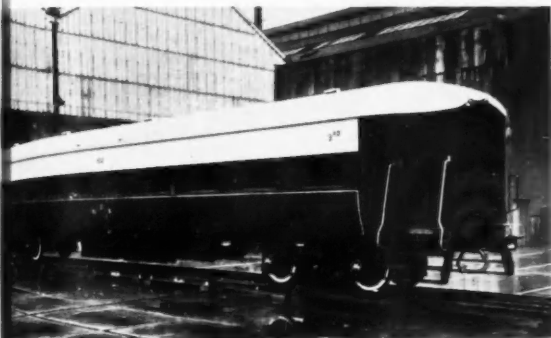
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2: PORTUGAL: Electric trailer car for Estoril Railway, 5ft. 6in. gauge; by Cravens Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd

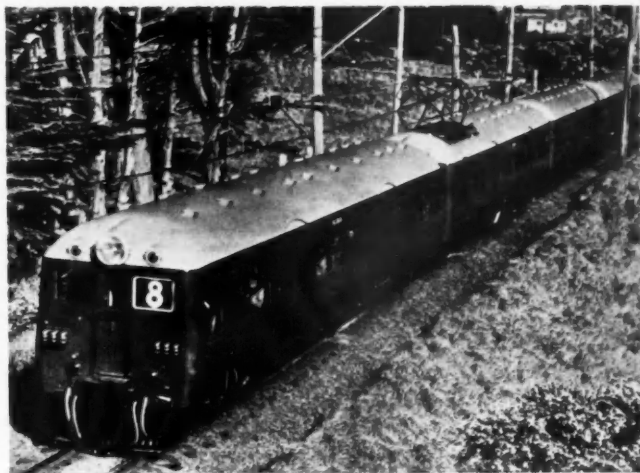


4: NIGERIA: Third-class coach by Cravens Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd

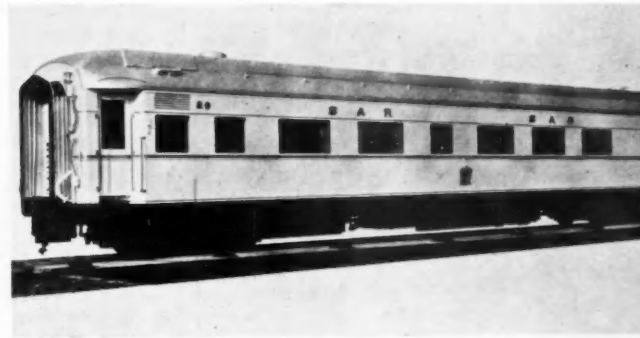
1: Air-conditioned first- and second-class composite carriage, built for the Iraqi Government Railways. Pullman influence can be seen in the design of the vestibules. Designed by Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd to Berne Convention standards for through Continental working from Calais to Baghdad.

2: A fine broad-gauge coach: Cravens third class electric trailer for the Estoril Railway, Portugal. The gauge, 5ft. 6in., enables a body 10ft. 8in. wide by 61ft. 8in. long to be used.

3: All-steel multiple-unit electric motor and trailer cars built in 1949 by the English Electric Co Ltd for the 3ft. 6in. gauge New Zealand Government Rail-



3: NEW ZEALAND: All-steel electric train for NZ Railways, 3ft. 6in. gauge; by the English Electric Co Ltd



5: SOUTH AFRICA: Coach for the Royal train; by Metropolitan-Cammell Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd

ways: part of an order for 49 motor and 79 trailer coaches.

4: Modern colonial-type third-class coach now being built for Nigeria by Cravens Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd. Tropical features include tinted glass and steel sunshades; noteworthy also are the pronounced tumble-home and the graceful doming over vestibules.

5: Royal saloon for the South African Railways, built by Metropolitan-Cammell, 1946-47, for the Royal tour. It is of all-steel construction, and the roof—its shape derived from the clerestory of earlier Pullman practice—contains the ducts of the air-conditioning system.

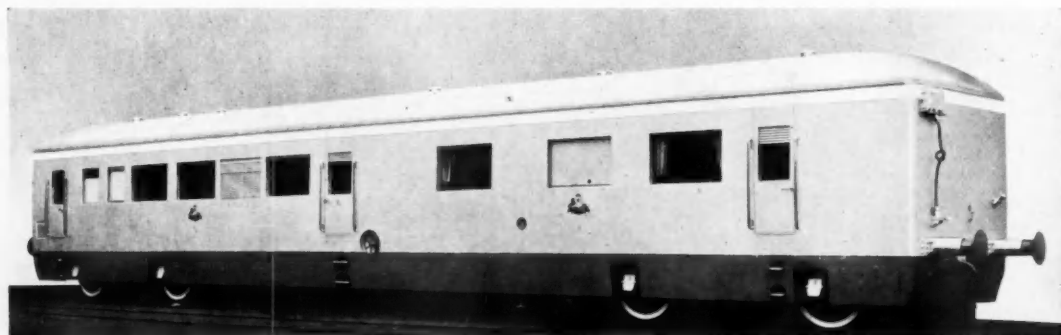
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decorations and sometimes for seating that looked more luxurious than it was.

The general standard of motor coach *décor* was often deplorable; but the artisan and his family, used to making the annual pilgrimage from, say, Heckmondwike to Blackpool in some elderly third-class compartment of the old Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, in which the brightest thing was the shine of the horsehair cushions, received the motor coach with shouts of delight. Here was a cheap form of conveyance which was sumptuous and made them feel important. The train was stodgy, the coach flashy; and flash will always win over stodge with the multitude.

Before we laugh out the early motor coach, or the contemporary motor coach with its gaudy splendours, its sham streamlining, and such preposterous things as the dorsal fin, we should remember that they have shown that the travelling public, though its taste may be misguided, is conscious and appreciative of things done to please its eye.

In both rail and road vehicles, far better style can be seen in those which we build for export than in most of those used in Britain. We have designed many truly beautiful railway carriages for South America, South Africa and other countries. At most of the Earl's Court exhibitions there have been motor coaches, among many that are meretricious, which are comfortable and handsome—built for overseas service. The accompanying illustrations show, mainly, British design for export.



6: INDORE: *Special saloon carriage built for HH the Maharajah Holkar of Indore in 1937 by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd; a luxuriously equipped private vehicle complete with bathroom as well as eating and sleeping compartments*

6: A fine example of the self-contained private car; this was built in 1937 for the Maharajah of Indore by Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co Ltd. The slight inward curve of the sides is produced in the deep valances below floor level.

7: Rivaloy all-metal riveted 40-seat bus for export, of light alloy and steel, made by Saunders Engineering and Shipyard Ltd, mounted on Leyland *Royal Tiger* chassis. This vehicle (shown at the Commercial Motor Show) is part of the record 10-million-dollar order from Havana for 620 Leyland buses. Its clean lines would be all the cleaner if the stylish "peak" at the front end were omitted.

8: Metal motor-coach (39-seat) with adjustable leather seats, heating and ventilating equipment, sliding glass windows and power-operated door, used in South America. Made by Duple Motor Bodies Ltd; on Leyland chassis.

9: Solidly British, with good proportions and no frills, is this local-service bus for Wales. The absence of frills in a design like this makes sound workmanship and good finish essential. The chassis is an AEC *Regal* Mk III.

10: Midland Red long-distance coach with Duple body. A handsome coach in spite of the fashionable falling lines and a profusion of chromium trimmings.



7: CUBA: Bus for Havana; all-metal body by Saunders Engineering and Shipyard Ltd on Leyland Royal Tiger chassis



8: SOUTH AMERICA: Long-distance coach body with reclining seats; by Duple Motor Bodies Ltd, on Leyland chassis

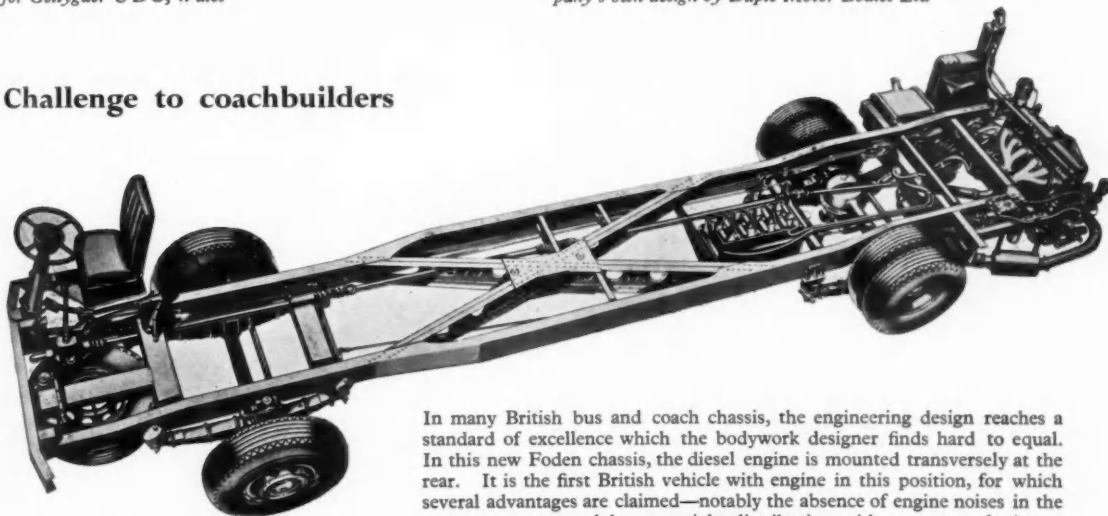


9: AEC Regal Mark III bus for Gellygaer UDC, Wales



10: Long-distance coach for Midland Red, built to the company's own design by Duple Motor Bodies Ltd

Challenge to coachbuilders



In many British bus and coach chassis, the engineering design reaches a standard of excellence which the bodywork designer finds hard to equal. In this new Foden chassis, the diesel engine is mounted transversely at the rear. It is the first British vehicle with engine in this position, for which several advantages are claimed—notably the absence of engine noises in the passenger seats, and better weight-distribution with consequently better road-holding. The new model (Foden PVRE 6; designer, E. Twemlow) was exhibited at the recent Commercial Motor Show, both in chassis form and with a luxury coach body.

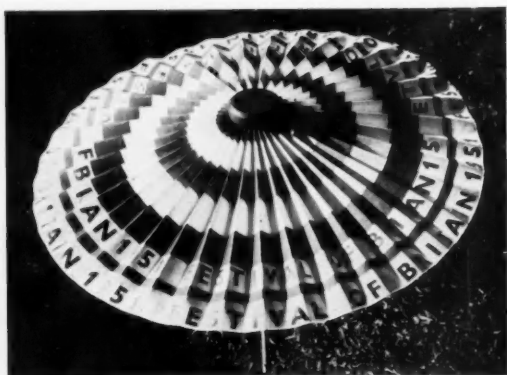


"How one misses Eric Ravilious!"
Left, the Coronation mug which he designed for Wedgwoods

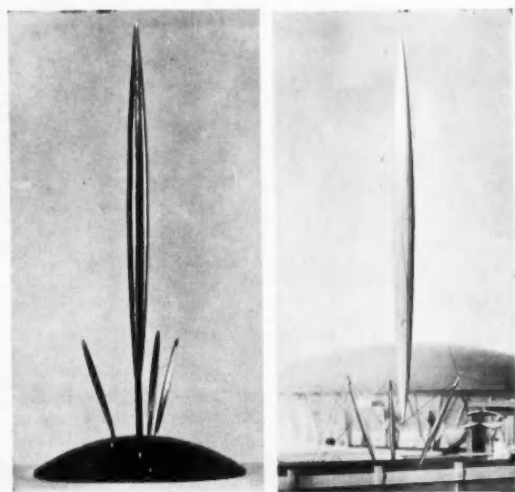


1951 Festival: a challenge

by Woodd



Prototype of the Sunbrella, a souvenir paper umbrella to be produced by Shepdale and Raggett, Walton-on-Thames

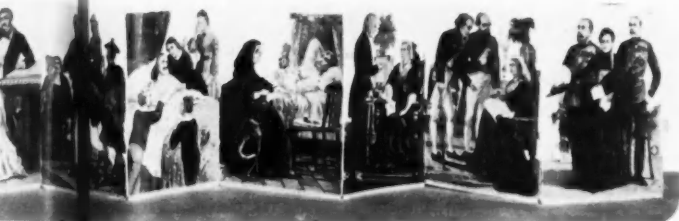


Vertical Feature of the South Bank exhibition, shown in model form on right, inspired Messrs Bolton and Whitehead of the Biro Pen Manufacturing Co to design the souvenir pen and stand, left

BEFORE DISCUSSING SOUVENIRS for the Festival of Britain, perhaps it would be a good thing to consider what we mean by *souvenirs* in general. The word has come to have a rather spurious ring in our ears—which is a pity. In the first place it is a foreign word, for which there appears to be no better substitute. *Memento* is equally foreign and sounds still less appetitising: *remembrance* is too solemn and archaic: while *keepsake*, which is charming and exact, refers invariably to its giver rather than to a place or an occasion. *Souvenir*, I believe, only sounds cheap to us because of the many cheap-and-nasty objects made in its name. Think of it in terms of the French verb, rather than of its English applications, and you must recognise a melodious run of syllables: there is nothing wrong with it as a word, or as an idea. It is something by which to remember a place, a holiday, an occasion, a particular happiness: a token, a memory, a treasure.

From this it follows what a good souvenir must be. First of all it must be truly reminiscent and evocative of the place and occasion on which it is bought: which means that it must be something that you cannot buy on any other occasion or in any other place—least of all at home. And then it must be worth having for its own sake. No one nowadays wants to spend his scanty foreign exchange—however expansive he is feeling—on rubbish: and no one wants to be reminded of a glamorous and exciting occasion by a shoddy object, merely because it was bought on the spot. On the other hand it must be reasonably inexpensive, and—since it is to be carted home—neither too bulky nor too fragile. But within these basic conditions a souvenir, as the old and new examples illustrated here suggest, can be almost anything.

The Festival of Britain is a unique occasion; and



1886 Jubilee
souvenir: a cut-out
paper sequence of
Victoria's reign.
Printed (in colour)
by Raphael Tuck

all souvenir manufacturers

by W. Woodden

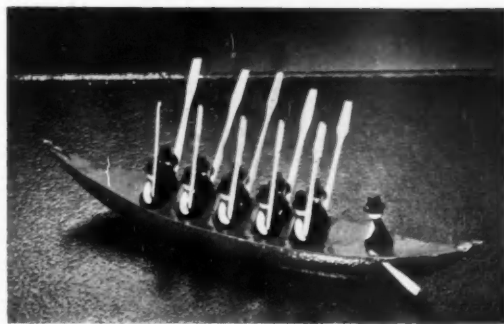
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souvenirs on sale at the official exhibitions and displays must therefore be identified with it in the closest possible way. At the very least they must bear the date, or the Festival symbol, or an appropriate legend. I am revealing no secrets of the Souvenir Committee's work by saying that this basic minimum has been the principal claim for eligibility of the majority of souvenirs so far submitted. Most of them are ordinary production lines forced into association with the Festival by the addition somewhere, somehow, of festival insignia. This is perfectly legitimate, and has in some cases produced results of considerable charm: but it is an approach which is extremely unlikely to produce souvenirs which really match the occasion; which capture to some extent, in miniature, the momentary magnificence of the Festival, its breadth, its flavour, its beauty and its fun.

The Victorian era, which the 1951 Festival in a way commemorates, excelled throughout all its exhibitions, jubilees and state occasions in making for each the prettiest, most ingenious adult toys, which sold for a few pence and which have been prized and collected ever since. A very few such souvenirs, designed from start to finish to celebrate the Festival year, have already been submitted—and eagerly endorsed by the Selection Committee. Is it too much to hope that designers of wit and imagination—how one misses Eric Ravilious at every turn!—may yet be employed by members of the appropriate industries to swell this trickle in the months to come, this trickle of really desirable *special* objects? The word of subtle and nostalgic meaning, *souvenir*, will not, I am sure, in the face of Presents from Ramsgate and tartan pincushions, regain its tarnished lustre: but that is no reason why 1951 souvenirs themselves should not be as bright as candy and as pretty as a Christmas tree.



Horse-brass for 1951; by Max Gate Ltd, Birmingham



Not lotos-eaters but churchgoers in their Sunday best form the crew of this brightly painted wooden boat: a Swedish example



Another gaily coloured souvenir from Scandinavia—by Kay Böjesen of Copenhagen. Inclusion of the Danish flag ensures that its country of origin will not be forgotten

WHAT'S IN A NAMEPLATE?

Too many well-designed machines—and metal products generally—are spoilt in appearance by badly-designed lettering. This article summarises the leading methods of nameplate production, and indicates their potentialities and limitations from the viewpoint of the designer

By J. Beresford-Evans

THE MANUFACTURER'S NAME goes on his products because he is proud of them; because, by reason of the association of his name with things of good quality, there may be repeat orders. While the informed public might recognise them from appearance alone, a name makes recognition certain.

The positions of instruction plates, operating data and other kinds of applied wording are determined by the need for having them close to the control referred to; nameplates, on the other hand, can go anywhere convenient; the physical limitations are slight. The nameplate should not, however, be regarded as an excuse for poster advertising. The careful design and manufacture of a nameplate can and should enhance the appearance of the product—not turn it into a display hoarding. Admittedly, coarse “chunky” treatment can be appropriate if robustness is to be suggested, but this suggestion should come from simplicity and elimination of detail, rather than sheer size.

It is not often that fine detail can be shown in the material of which the main shape is made; it usually requires separate treatment on a small scale, carried out in fine working materials. It is the way of using the material which counts, so that the scale of working is appropriate to the size of the name and to the finish of the part on which it is placed.

As an accent, standing out from its surroundings, the nameplate will attract attention; and as a small thing that will be studied at close range it ought to be jewel-like. The means at the designer's disposal are a wide choice of position, and styles of lettering which are immediately legible and in keeping with the function of the product or the quality which it is desired to stress.

It is the characteristic of adhering to the product, forming part of it, which determines whether the nameplate appears to be integral (as it should) or is seen as a separate piece of advertising matter. The problem is that of associating a group of letters or a sign with a three-dimensional object. One of the most satisfactory ways of uniting the name with the structure is to incorporate it in the design of a control or an instrument panel, where its fine detail is in keeping with the small part on which it is borne, and where it will naturally receive close inspection.

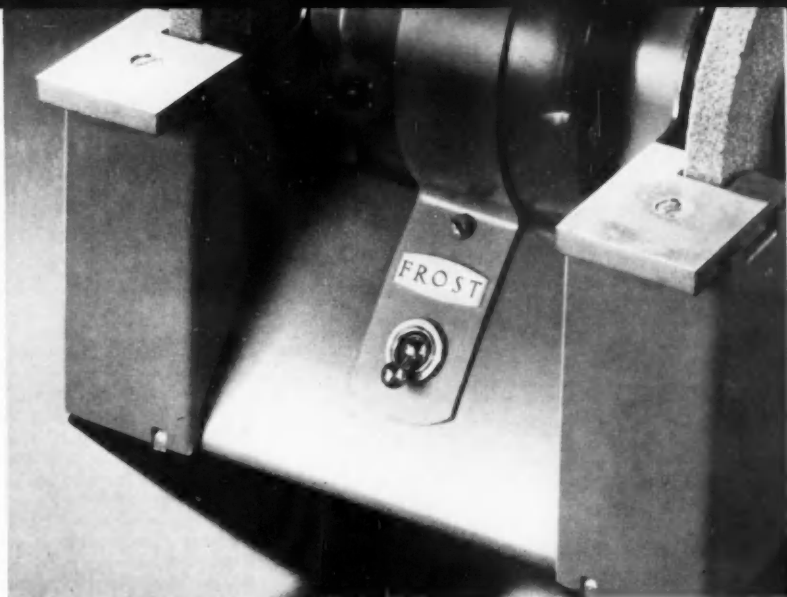
Any nameplate or sign will look its best if the material is used in the most direct way—shaped by the simplest processes. For example, a spade handle cannot carry a metal plate for fear of damaging the user's hand, and a paper label or a transfer will soon wear off: but a permanent and effective mark can be burnt in, to form part of the wooden handle, if the branding iron is designed to take advantage of the characteristics of the process.

From this homely example we can turn to processes which are currently in use for the production of nameplates for machines and other metalwares. A few of them could be applied in any well-equipped workshop, but the majority involve specialised craftsmanship which is only available through specialist firms of nameplate manufacturers. It would be impossible to summarise their “know-how” in even the lengthiest article, and the following notes are intended only for the general guidance of manufacturer and designer, indicating as concisely as possible those characteristics of the different methods of making nameplates which affect their design.

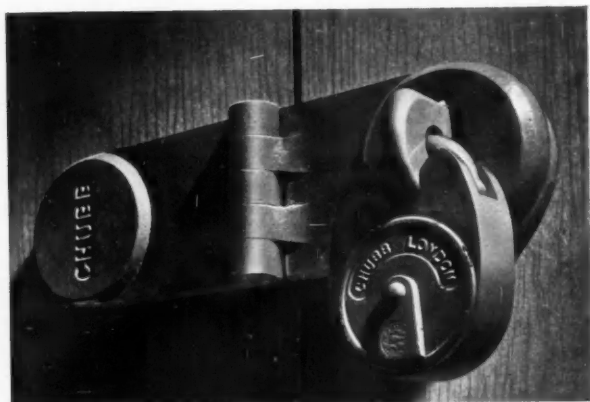
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Nameplate designed by Roy F. Perkins and made by Brown Bros, Aston, Birmingham, for the 4-inch bench grinder manufactured by H. Frost & Co Ltd, Walsall



Evidently, a great deal of trouble was taken to ensure accurate shaping and fine lettering of the Frost nameplate, shown here, in drawing and final form; who could say that it was not justified in the result? Prominently sited, the plate adds a finishing touch to the appearance of the whole machine. Strategically placed next to the switch, it need not be large or showy to catch the eye



This padlock bar carries bold letters which reproduce clearly in cast malleable iron; but the padlock itself, which is drop-forged, has appropriately finer detail: good traditional design such as one might expect from a lock- and safe-making firm



The Bristol tractor nameplate is a gravity die-casting in LAC 112 alloy. The name face is polished, and colour (bright red) is applied to the background by spraying synthetic enamel. Individually, some of the letters and figures are coarse in detail; but the plate as a whole looks right when in position on the side of the tractor

continued

INTEGRAL LETTERING

With many metal products, it is difficult to cast any lettering integrally with the body because the same medium is not appropriate for the fine detail of one and the broad masses of the other. If these difficulties are mastered, however, the nameplate which forms part of the product, with no suggestion of being an added label, has commercial as well as aesthetic advantages; for example, it cannot be removed by an unscrupulous merchant who wishes to conceal a machine's true source of origin. This is one reason for the popularity, in the past, of integral lettering on castings.

The design of letters and figures for casting remains important because they are still used frequently for part numbers and brief operating instructions, though less frequently, nowadays, for manufacturers' names. Considerations affecting design in this field are to be discussed shortly in a separate article.

The illustrations on pp 21-24 all show nameplates which are made separately from the products to which they will be attached. They are not all paragons of design; they have been chosen as typical of the various processes of nameplate manufacture discussed below.

SAND-CASTING

The sand-casting process is widely used in the production of nameplates. In typical iron or brass-foundry practice, sand-casting could not be regarded as a suitable process for the reproduction of fine detail; but nameplate-manufactur-

ing firms—who use metal patterns instead of wood, and cast in very fine sand—achieve a high degree of precision. Though 3/32in. is recommended as a minimum height for lettering, even smaller letters can be used without much loss of legibility.

Almost any kind of lettering, whether hand-drawn or a type-face, can be reproduced in a casting. The pattern for it is produced by engraving. Where no special style is specified, and for small subsidiary wording, the nameplate manufacturers have standard alphabets, which are unobjectionable if unexciting in design. One of the clearest is called a "modern block" alphabet; the typographer might describe it as a reasonably close approximation to Gill Sans.

The fact that the letters in a sand-casting stand proud of their background gives them prominence, and this is enhanced by the contrast of their smooth surfaces with the diapered or textured backgrounds which are usually employed. This treatment of the background has also the practical merit of hiding any minute irregularity which may be caused by slight movement of the sand when the molten metal is poured into the mould; and it provides a good keying surface for the application of colour, where this is considered desirable.

One reason for the popularity of sand-cast nameplates is the variety of finishes obtainable. The face can be polished, against a background kept unpolished; or colour can be wiped into the background. Again, either face or background can be plated; and finally, both face and background can be enamelled in two different colours. The strongest possible contrast is perhaps obtained

with this technique, which has been developed in the last few years. Although the raised area of the face is usually slight, the enamels used today will adhere to it almost indefinitely, given ordinary wear and tear.

The metal usually employed for sand-cast nameplates is bronze.

DIE-CASTING

Die-casting is especially useful for nameplates which have to be produced in large quantities—large enough, that is, to justify the cost of making the steel dies. Zinc and aluminium alloys are generally used for die-cast plates; they can be satisfactorily cast in steel dies, whereas bronze cannot because a higher temperature is necessary to render it fluid, and this would cause the dies to deteriorate too rapidly.

As letters can readily be cut into the die, the simplest and usually the most satisfactory design will be one in which the letters on the final casting are raised from their background. If the nameplate is to form part of a functional casting, it can be set in a recessed panel so that the letters do not project beyond the main surface, having been milled out from a raised land in the die.

Lettering which *must* be recessed on the finished part can be produced by driving a hob into the die, or by using an insert; but there is danger of damage by erosion by the flow of hot metal past the small projections, and it is seldom worth while if the mould is large or deep. Again, it is possible to produce lettering on a face inclined to the die parting, but the best results are on a face parallel to the parting, which is usually a logical place.

Serifs and sharp corners are not easily cut in the depth of a die cavity; they can more readily be shaped in the surface of an insert or in a shallow die used to cast a separate nameplate. Inserts will, of course, show a trace of their junction with the main body of the die; a deliberate change of level may help to mask this.

MECHANICAL ENGRAVING

This process is very similar to die-engraving, except, of course, that a positive is produced by the cutting tool.

Plain cuts with an end-mill or router are not very successful owing to the heavy effect of the radius, giving a rounded appearance to the ends of all letter strokes.

Mechanical engraving is at its best when the width of cut is built up by several passes of a small diameter tool; and when the corners or serifs can be hand-finished—as, in the best work, they invariably are.



Left: Nameplates for the variable-speed gears made by Allspeeds Ltd are notable for their use of slab-serif letters and the contrast between different colours used for the face and the background. Size of original, 4½in. wide. Right: an example of maker's name "incorporated in a control or instrument panel." Polished surfaces of letters and figures show up against a dark, textured background. Size, 5½in. diameter. All three plates shown are sand-castings by Butler Jones (Nameplates) Ltd

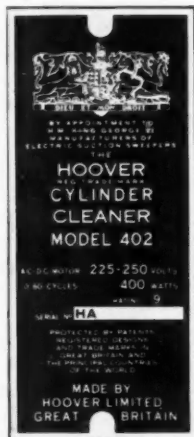
CHEMICAL ETCHING

From the lettering standpoint, this has the great advantage of starting from a drawn or type-set original—which is photographed, printed on to a sensitised brass sheet as a resist, and then etched. Colour contrast is obtained by chemically blackening the plate and then polishing off the un-etched parts to show bright metal. Alternatively, colour can be wiped into the etched depressions; or colour may be screen-printed and wiped into selected parts.

This technique is so cheap and so flexible that it can be easily abused. A clear letter will reproduce without too much loss of detail down to about $\frac{1}{16}$ in. letter height; $\frac{1}{16}$ in. is, however, a better minimum size, and a fair amount of space around the word is a great asset. The problem of layout for the chemically engraved plate is very like that for



This enamelled nameplate shows a good use of white on a dark colour—which avoids difficulty at the edges and fixing-holes; there will be no problem of matching the small area of white with the white of the product on which it is mounted. The label is curved before firing to fit the curved body of the Ascot water heater. By James Bruton & Son Ltd. 2in. wide



Consistent use of sans-serif lettering on this plate (made by the Metal Gravure Co Ltd) ensures that wording, even in small sizes, is readable. Size of original, 4½ in. deep

printed matter, but a nameplate is more permanent than a piece of printed advertising and it is seldom the appropriate place for rules and ornaments which might look well on paper.

The quality of wiped-in colour can be good, but several colours applied through a silk screen are not so successful. It is possible, however, to build up a surface by repeated stove enamellings, which are then polished flush with the un-etched surface.

VITREOUS ENAMELLING

There is a good range of colours in vitreous enamel, and the surface will withstand wear better than most colouring media. It is not easy to use pastel shades.

The characteristics are brilliance, permanence of colour and hard surface; and where these qualities can be exploited, the medium can be used with a good

deal of flexibility in design. The several colours are either laid on through a silk screen, or by using stencils. In the latter method the coloured glaze is dipped or sprayed on and the excess is then brushed away through a lead stencil, each successive colour being fired. A quarter of an inch is a practical minimum height for stencil-cut letters, and slightly less for silk screen work. Smaller letters, half-tone effects and fine detail can be applied through lithographic transfers, but the real character of the medium lies in its rich colour with clear and bold outline.

Firing at about 850°C means that there will be a certain flow of glaze from a sharp edge. It is advisable, therefore, that the edge of the plate should be in black or a dark colour, or else that it should be turned back, for it is the thinly covered bare edge that is most liable to damage.

Nameplate in black, red and green translucent enamel. The outline of the tree and the letters of the name are ridges of metal, the tops of which are flush with the enamel around them. Made by Toye & Co Ltd for Bush Radio (not in current use). Actual size



In the very finest nameplate work, the flowing characteristics of enamels are used by allowing them to fill the spaces between raised lines of metal. Gilding metal or copper is stamped or cut with the design so that the enamel filling, when stoned and polished, will be at the same level as the lines. It is possible to work on a curved surface; relief effects can be obtained by leaving some recessed (and possibly textured) parts without enamel. Lettering reads best with bright metal showing against a dark enamel ground; necessarily, with this method of production, each enamel colour and the surround of the whole plate must be bordered by a metal line.

This use of enamel lends itself well to heraldic technique, and small areas work well. A large area of ground colour will work better and be much more durable if it can be broken by a diaper of metal points.

The outstanding advantage of this medium (which is also used for badges, regalia and enamelled jewellery) is the immaculate finish and the brilliance or translucency of colour obtainable.



Aluminium nameplate for an electric fan. The metal is printed in sheet form, then lacquered, and finally blanked and shaped. It fits at the centre of the fan guard. 1½ in. diameter

PRINTING

Direct printing on the plate or label is usually applied to acetate sheet or to tinplate or aluminium by offset lithography. Black prints well on acetate, but large areas of colour are inclined to look blotchy and none of the printing can be very intense or clear coloured.

With sheet tin or aluminium, the same well-known technique can be employed for producing nameplates as is used in metal-box production. Indeed, as metal boxes are printed in the flat, and made-up afterwards, the two present the same problems from the designer's viewpoint.

Anodised aluminium sheet is hard-wearing as the print can be sealed in by re-anodising, but it will not withstand

WHAT'S IN A NAMEPLATE?

continued

high temperatures. Blacks are intense, detail is good and colours are clear, if a trifle sharp. It is through the rich quality of black that aluminium excels.

ACRYLIC RESIN SHEET

Because of the high finish which can be obtained, and their relative ease of working, the acrylic resins (Perspex, etc) are sometimes used as nameplates on metal products. This type of material is obtainable in sheet form in a variety of thicknesses, and can be printed, silk-screened or engraved. Good results have been obtained by engraving on the back of the sheet and in-filling the engraved lines with colour.

The types of machine normally used for engraving metals are suitable for engraving Perspex; ICI, the makers of this material, state that best results are achieved by using a cutter ground to an angle of 45 degrees, with the cutting edge backed off to an angle of 7 degrees.

EMBOSSED FOIL

Paper-backed foil can be printed with colour and then embossed to give a very brilliant effect. Small labels made by this process will justify careful detailing, for they can look rich and precious. They are at their best when used in shallow depressions into which they may be stuck, and although bruisable they are quite secure in such a site.

Unbacked foil can also, of course, be used for nameplates, where it is considered to be of sufficient thickness: from the designer's viewpoint it then presents the same problems as embossed sheet metal. Embossing is a process whose worst enemy is the facility with which it can be carried out; but with restraint in design—lettering which does not try to include minute serifs and fine hair-lines, illustration which is formal rather than



The nameplate on this Chubb office safe, which embraces the unlocking handle and key-hole cover, is of Perspex, engraved from the back and filled with colour. The same style of lettering is used in transfer form on the inside of the door, and in all Chubb publicity material

representational—it can be put to good use.

A latex or similar type of adhesive is suitable with paper-backed foil nameplates, but rivetting is a more satisfactory method of attaching unbacked metal.

* * *

Any separate plate, except those which are stuck on with adhesive, will require fixing: it is not good enough to leave the bolt, drive screw or nail to an arbitrary hole in the corner. This may or may not be the right place; what the designer must realise is that wherever the bolt is, its head will show and its presence must be accepted in planning the design.

When the mark to be applied is one of those monograms or words written in characters which have been revered—or to which we have become inured—by long association, it may be difficult to

use them in a dignified nameplate. A clean break with a bad tradition and alignment with good present-day typographical practice is then a sensible step.

The main purpose of lettering, on a nameplate or anywhere else, is that it should be read; to depart from the accepted forms and proportions of letters gives peculiarity rather than distinction. In newspaper advertising, where the name is in competition with clamorous neighbours, the problem is different, for it must in itself be arresting. The name-sign on a product is isolated from other influences, standing alone in a similar manner to the title-page of a book. Character will be given by the choice of appropriate type, such as a seemingly mechanical one like the Johnston Underground sans-serif, or perhaps by one of the traditional Roman faces; nothing of dignity or of intelligibility is added by the distortion of letter forms for individuality's sake.

By comparison with printers, nameplate manufacturers make little use of letter-spacing, and the designer who wishes his letters to be widely spaced should specify this clearly on his working drawing. If he does not want full-points inserted at the end of principal lines of wording, this too should be made clear. At the same time, if one goes to a reputable firm it is unwise to tie them down too closely in matters of detail, for their specialised technical knowledge may suggest solutions to problems with which the outside designer can hardly expect to be familiar.

Nameplates are important because the eye so often rests upon them. They are a relatively inexpensive detail, but their effect on the appearance of the whole product is out of all proportion to their price or size. The name is the part of a product which, whether it is on a car radiator or on the back of a fan motor, can be shaped with comparative freedom: it is worth a place among other serious matters during design and development.



Printed nameplate in two colours (blue and white) on aluminium, by Richard Ching and Son Ltd. Designed by Frank Mortimer for use on the Trinal range of hospital furniture, illustrated in DESIGN No 14; shown here actual size



Two nameplates in embossed paper-backed foil: for BSM by Millett, Levens and for Lea-Francis Cars Ltd by Walsall Lithographic Company Ltd. The Lea-Francis example was used on a catalogue cover, but this type of nameplate is frequently used on metal products also. Size of originals; left, 2½in.; above, 1½in. wide

Hallmark for good design: readers' views for and against

It should help the public

SIR: As one interested in the plastics industry, I have read with interest the article under the heading "A hallmark for good design?" in your August issue.

I quote from the second paragraph. "Value for money must be seen to be believed: and that closes the door in many industries to the hidden virtues of fine workmanship, while opening the door to all manner of mayonnaise and mascara." Does value for money have to be seen to be believed? Is it not one of the functions of publicity and advertisement and even the showcard or label to point out the value of a product? Value and price may prove to be two very different factors with little or no connection and they should not be confused. Too often the article of low price may have only fleeting value, if any at all. It is the pleasure or service which products give which endows them with value. It is not the price; in fact, if some things were given away they would still have no value—probably a good reason for giving them away!

Presumably the "mayonnaise and mascara" are the shoddy goods which unfortunately flood so many shops. The cheap lines such as mugs, plates and a host of useless and ill-designed articles, badly decorated with a transfer of, say, Blackpool tower or Margate pier which rubs off almost whilst they are being wrapped up for the customer, appear to sell in their thousands. It almost makes one despair that the great British public will ever let itself be educated in taste or design.

Yet there is a stratum of society which likes and appreciates good things, good design and good value. Sometimes this class cannot trust its own judgment so it chooses to buy branded products, feeling that it must then be on fairly safe ground.

The idea of a hallmark or certification mark is a sound one and may be regarded as a refinement of the idea behind the branding of goods. Such a mark should leave no doubt in the mind of the purchasing public that it was buying something which had been made to a certain standard of quality or performance rather than down to a price. The service

or satisfaction given in use would help considerably to extend the sales and would exert a desirable tendency towards educating the public in the value of good articles.

A certification mark for plastics goods exists and is being sponsored by the British Plastics Federation in conjunction with the British Standards Institution, and if it becomes more widely adopted it will result in a levelling up of standards of quality and therefore of value.

The Plastics Federation advocates also a system of labelling which will supply information regarding the use of the articles to which the labels are attached. This will enable the buyer to get more value from his purchases even if the advice is only as to the treatment which should not be used. We are all too familiar with glass to need to have, say, a stem glass labelled, "Do not throw it on the floor—it will break," but many people have not sufficient knowledge of the many varieties of plastics to know which should not be put in hot water, which are fragile or flexible, or how they should be treated generally. The label will perform an educative function.

The attitude of the manufacturer should be to welcome any such scheme which should help the public to know when it is buying quality—or in other words, when it is getting value.

C. S. DINGLEY
Director

London W1
British Industrial Plastics Ltd

Mark would stimulate attention

SIR: Many people like to be advised on questions of taste, just as they like to be assured of the quality of a piece of silver. We should, I suppose, all agree that the hallmarking of silver has been a good thing. Aesthetic quality, however, is not similarly indisputable and some of us will perhaps doubt whether on the whole it will be a good thing that some particular objects shall bear a certificate from some particular people that in their judgment the design of those particular objects is good.

You invite me to express my own opinion whether, in spite of any such

doubts, this idea should be tried out. By force of circumstances my answer must be upon the spur of the moment and without consultation. For what it may be worth that answer is that for my own part I think an experiment of this kind is almost certain to turn out well if only by stimulating attention to such matters and care for them.

Presumably the results of any such venture will depend upon the ability and will of the hallmarkers to avoid narrowness in their appraisals and to contrive that the subsequent operation of the general conception is not too seriously warped by wrong motives of one sort or another.

The real interests in the long run of manufacturers and of traders must surely be in the direction of fostering public appreciation of beauty and of utility. The more people get real pleasure from this or that, the greater their inclination to spend upon it. Certainly notions that are false may impel as strongly as those that are true, but demand arising from notions that are false must be founded upon sand, and so must the livelihood arising from the supplying of that demand.

In attempting to deal with the fundamentals of such topics one fears to fall into platitudes and I hesitate to add that any fostering of good design must tend on the whole to improve the factory-products that we have got to export if the population of this island is not to shrink extremely.

J. SPEDAN LEWIS

Chairman

London W1

John Lewis Partnership Ltd

"Smart boys" would listen

SIR: Verily your leader-writer "P.R." sits high upon our controversial seasaw and the "borax" merchants well and truly in the mud. Much of what he says is true, undoubtedly, but the weight of his arguments is unlikely to bring the creaking structure into balance and the protagonists eye to eye. He flays alike the fabricators of "moderne" and pseudo-Tudor and would, apparently, confine production of contemporary designs to the upper levels of the industry.

The scope of furniture design is limited, and even in the highly individualistic clothing trade it is the *haut couturier* who sets the fashion for the rest, unreservedly. Comparatively few can afford his originals: the masses must be grateful for the copy. "P.R." is very right to make a stand for quality, but to make comparisons with the standards of a better day is simply looking through the end of Nelson's telescope.

Even where they are available, quality materials are as far beyond the reach

of price-controlled producers, economically, as the finished product would be above the pocket of the lower-grade consumer. Furthermore, as a critic of the generation which swings Mozart, he will wholly realise that it no longer produces sufficient craftsmen to go round.

I am not defending the purveyors of "mayonnaise and mascara," for even they must realise that progress in design is overdue. Some of us have made serious efforts in the past to launch improved designs, only to have them washed back upon us—expensive flotsam. . . . If the voice of discrimination can somehow raise itself above the clamour of Vox Populi, many of us "smart boys" will be eager, within our limits, to listen.

Mutual recrimination will oil no hinges, but if our relative positions on the see-saw could be adjusted intelligently, there is no reason why serious and helpful criticism should be resented in the trade, and a fair and reasonable system of hallmarking would surely be welcomed by any responsible manufacturer as a safeguard against deterioration and the cut-throat competition we knew before the war.

A. WYNN HEALY

Director

Enfield Furniture Manufacturing Co Ltd

Enfield, Middlesex

Strength in numbers of selectors

SIR: In your August issue "P.R." draws our attention to the selection of books by independent committees and asks whether, if the practice were extended to other trades, it would be of equal value to the customer, retailer or manufacturer or whether it would be regarded as an unwarrantable interference with private enterprise.

My own view is that some form of selection, and even hallmarking, might be helpful, provided there were certain safeguards; the chief being that there should be a number of such selection coterie in different parts of the country, so that different points of view would be represented, and no group would become the worse for power. All selection of design should be accompanied by discussion—on the lines of the DIA quizzes, first practised in Birmingham—about and around the actual goods; and lastly, if the tax-payers' money is involved, the greatest care should be exercised to prevent it getting into the hands of any one coterie or group of critics.

We are here dealing with a branch of art criticism, which, as experience teaches us, tends to become a "racket," in the sense that, on the one hand a sort of sycophancy is fostered; and on the other, over-preoccupation with ques-

tions of power, self-advertisement and prestige. I cannot help feeling that "P.R." is naive when he says that no one has complained about dictatorship of taste by book-critics. I should rather like to hear what some of the writers have to say.

The fact is that almost every creative artist has, at some time or other, inveighed against the academics and critics. To quote one, the poet Sturge Moore: "Cenacles and coterie seek importance, not contemplative delight, and their would-be leaders are merely busy forming cabinets of authority."

R. D. BEST

Chairman

Best & Lloyd Ltd

Birmingham

Architects fail to give a lead

SIR: While supporting the suggestion of hallmarking for the furniture and other industries, I feel the proposal is premature in present circumstances. In the world of letters, anyone interested possesses the basic attribute of being able to read before the question of critical selection presents itself. The propagation of design appreciation on a nation-wide scale is imperative before the equivalent can be assumed in the world of design. I do not wish to underestimate the good work being done by the Council of Industrial Design and other bodies, but it must be admitted that design appreciation is far from being an essential item in the school curriculum of tomorrow's citizens. . . . Little can be done to correct the lack of critical appreciation in the present generation, but please let us see to it that the purchaser of tomorrow's home can "read" design and thus be in a position to select from the range of hallmarked furniture.

The education of the young is useless without the education of the industry. The prime defaulter is the retailer. . . .

The manufacturer glibly blames the buyer for lack of enterprise and naturally refuses to manufacture furniture the buyer will not purchase. A High Wycombe manufacturer assured me that he relies entirely on the buyers for his design policy. The same manufacturer complained of stocks of contemporary Utility furniture which he could not dispose of. He was endeavouring to obtain a trained designer who could "embellish" similar designs with unimaginative ornament which the buyers assured him the public wanted.

Retribution should also be heaped upon the architectural profession which lacks the ability to lead in the world of design. . . . Well designed buildings are required to house well designed objects. The citizen can only be confused when one Government department urges him to look and examine critically before he

purchases while another uses his income tax to disguise steel-framed office blocks with a good thick layer of pseudo-Georgian-cum-Gothic-cum-Grecian trimmings.

First things first; please do not ignore the foundations.

Battle, Sussex

RICHARD B. HORNBY

Points from other letters

From Roger Diplock, secretary, Retail Trading-Standards Association:

"... Let those who have the welfare of the furniture industry at heart endeavour to inculcate the spirit of good design upon our schools and in the minds of the industry but let the progress go no further, for any effort to dogmatise upon the artistic merits of the finished article would reap only the abuse of the public and, incidentally, would probably lose retailers a good deal of money into the bargain.

"Good taste, like good manners, is learnt in the early years of life, and it is extremely difficult to teach anyone either of these virtues after they have left school. From the point of view of the public let any hallmark be a mark of good quality but spare the over-regimented shopper from the eulogistic advice of those who would allow themselves to be set up as arbiters of taste."

From Andrew A. Coleman, Richmond, Surrey:

"... Applying democratic principles to the 'Oxford Street rambles,' we can only offer the idea of good design to these people. If they are unable to accept it, the following points must be considered: (a) The design is not good enough to overcome the pull of bad design, or (b) the cost of the good design is prohibitive; or (c) the good design is so good that the bad-design habitué cannot live with it. This factor (c) is predominant in the lives of many people in Great Britain today. . . . Some of us find it difficult to live with quite elementary new designs, because we are not used to them. . . . they present a kind of embarrassment to our lives.

"Old habits are hard to break. To break a bad habit we must gradually introduce some other habit in its place, preferably a good one. Similarly, good design should be injected into one's system slowly but surely. . . .

"... Universal improvement of appreciation and ability would eliminate the necessity of labelling goods as 'good design.' Putting the 'good design' label on a product will not sell it to those who are unable to appreciate its finer points. This is proved to some extent by the fact that people still buy books which are not recommended; those books which are branded as bad often have largest sales."

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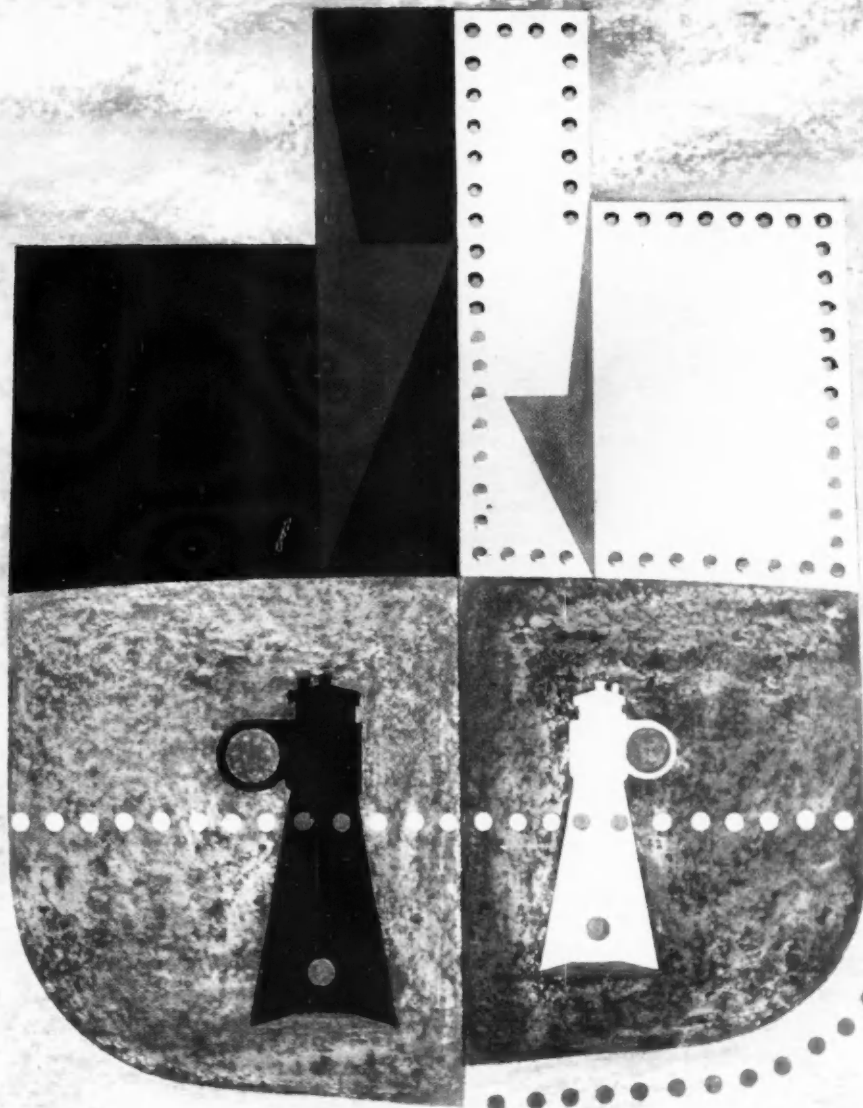
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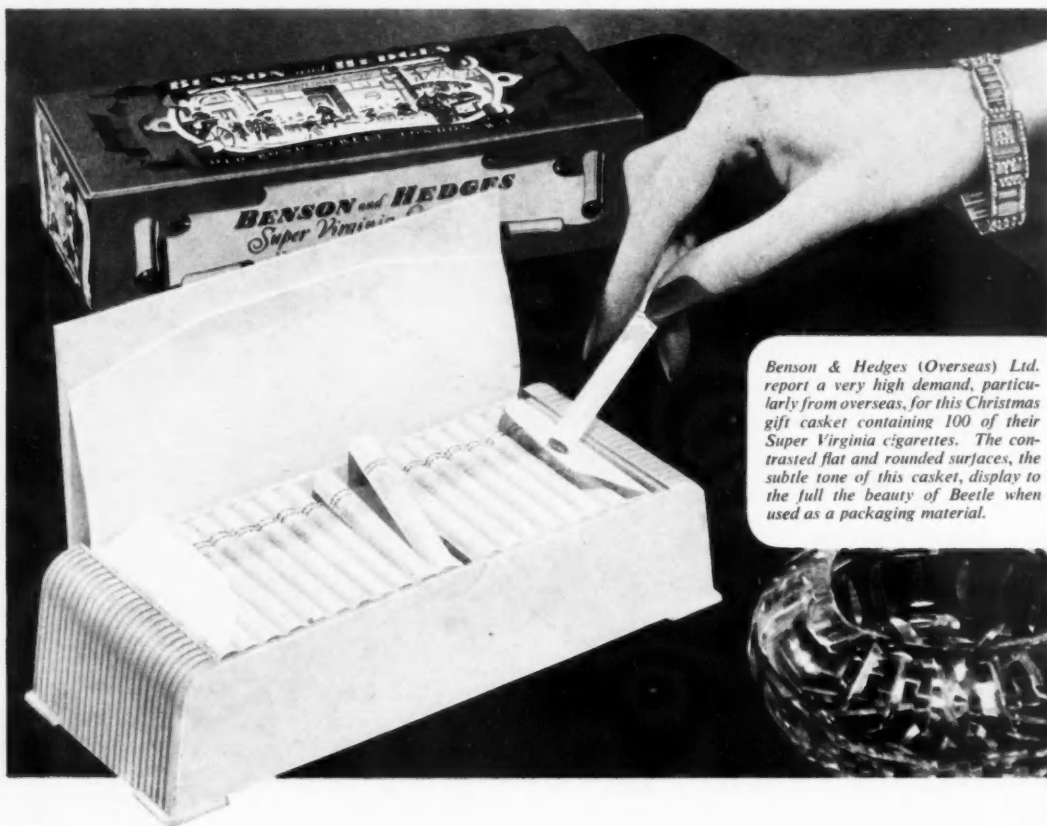
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Top weight is a serious problem in cross-channel ships. An aluminium alloy superstructure will minimise this, the improved stability allowing reduced beam and draught. This in turn means less power and reduced fuel costs.



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Benson & Hedges (Overseas) Ltd. report a very high demand, particularly from overseas, for this Christmas gift casket containing 100 of their Super Virginia cigarettes. The contrasted flat and rounded surfaces, the subtle tone of this casket, display to the full the beauty of Beetle when used as a packaging material.

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Industrial Design Abstracts

Furniture and furnishing: "Hungarian Cabinet-making." Serviceability and quality are now the two chief requirements in furniture, says Gyula Kaesz, professor at the Hungarian Academy of Applied Art. Hungarian furniture designers find the development of the traditional forms to suit modern needs a better approach than experimentalism. The modern method of designing standardises the elements, but guarantees an infinite variety of combinations. Standard furniture must not become uniform, and everybody should be able to buy good, individual pieces in a department store just as they buy clothes. There is scope for the unique, more decorative pieces which cannot be afforded in homes, in the furnishing of public buildings. *Hungarian Foreign Trade*, Budapest, June 1950

"To Make a Dream Home." An analysis by Michael Sheridan of the results of *Modern Woman's* £100 furnishing competition shows a concentration by competitors on simple, efficient furniture. *Modern Woman*, September 1950

General: "The Tradition in Good Design." The fact that design is more than surface decoration, that it is concerned with problems of use and construction, with relationship to all aspects of living, is a principle of good design which is again being recognised as fundamental. When function and method of manufacture remain essentially the same, objects

such as hand tools produced today are similar to those of the past. New techniques and new social attitudes give rise to new products which cannot be traditional in design, but must nevertheless be of good design. The public shows that it may continue indefinitely to buy a good thing, and this should strengthen the belief of manufacturers in the desirability of honest evolution and refinement, instead of built-in obsolescence. *Everyday Art Quarterly*, Minneapolis, Summer 1950

"The Applied Arts in Switzerland," by Willy Rotzler. Assessment of the position of the applied arts in Switzerland. They still have no real access to industrial production and there is danger that they will lapse into a false traditionalism, or an equally unauthentic modernism. *Werk*, Zurich, August 1950

Interiors: "American Factory Design and Layout," by Anthony G. Hayek. American factory design is noteworthy for the high standard of lighting and heating maintained, and the attention paid to providing effective colour-schemes. *The Times Review of Industry*, August 1950

Machinery: "How Product Design Cuts Cost." A cost-analysis group in the engineering department is considered as a means to more economical product design. *McGraw-Hill Digest*, New York, August 1950



This Norwegian bus is of chassisless type, in aluminium alloy. Overall length is 32 feet; the bus has seats for 24 and standing space for another 51. Earlier models have been in service in Oslo since 1929, when the first experimental bus was constructed—against expert advice. They have amply justified their selection, both technically and economically. The manufacturer is A/S Strømmens Værksted; the bus is powered by a Leyland 9.8 litre diesel engine and many of the main components are British

Printing: *International Printing*, No 2, deals mainly with the use of colour photography "in an original and creative way in the Art of Printing." All aspects of its use are considered in a series of articles covering publicity, fashion, publishing, reproduction, camera work, facsimiles and lighting. (Jarrol & Sons Ltd, Norwich, 1950; 5s)

Packaging: The British Export Trade Research Organisation reports on a survey made last year into the packaging of certain consumer goods (cutlery and flatware, grocery, drug-store and men's wear products) intended for sale in Canada. The investigation covered the consumer-appeal aspects of packaging and not protective problems, and was detailed and comprehensive. Among the many findings was the conclusion that sales of UK goods in Canada are potentially highest in areas where good packaging is most valued, so that it is especially important for UK makers to pay attention to the attractiveness of their packages. Detailed recommendations are given for dealing with packaging problems in general and for those of the particular products surveyed. *Packaging Consumer Goods for the Canadian Market* (HMSO, 1950; 3s 6d)

Textiles: "The Design and Production of Tie Fabrics," by A. T. C. Robinson. Tie designs are divided into self-colour and stripe, and their production is described under these heads. *Skinner's Silk & Rayon Record*, August 1950

Training: "The Role in Industry of the Royal College of Art," by Robin Darwin. The Principal takes the possible acquisition of a residential centre for the college as an occasion for explaining the work of the College and its relation to industry. *FBI Review*, August 1950 (See also *DESIGN*, No 21)

Transport: "Passenger Seats for Aircraft." The main requirements of a passenger seat are that it should provide maximum comfort throughout a long journey and for the various sizes of people who use it. In addition, it must comply with regulations on strength and weight. Neither the design of the seat, nor of any of its adjuncts, must give the air passenger any feeling of insecurity. All these points are taken into consideration by C. H. Cumberland and G. S. Bowey, who give detailed analyses of seat dimensions in relation to anatomy, of structural and upholstery materials, and of equipment such as foot-rests and reading lamps, with the final recommendation that, in all future civil aircraft, seats should face backwards. *Aircraft Engineering*, September 1950

The impact of a Lithembos seal in advertisement design is immediate and powerful. On a pack, a booklet cover or a showcard a Lithembos seal in solid metal or coloured foil delivers a message with vigour and conciseness. Whether the design is dignified, dramatic or decorative, an appropriate seal can be produced at a cost which is usually remarkably low. A specialised design service is available if required.

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Notebook

Manufacturers discuss design

"WE PROSPER by design more than any other factor." So said R. A. Maclean, chairman of A. F. Stoddard and Co Ltd, carpet manufacturers, in a recent discussion on Design Policy in the Home Furnishing Industries.

The discussion, arranged jointly by the Industrial Art Committee of the Federation of British Industries and the Council of Industrial Design, was held on 12 September in the FBI's Council Room, with John Gloag in the chair. Questions, some prepared, some spontaneous, drew information from the platform party on such points as these:

On co-ordination of design trends in complementary industries: D. Gomme, director of E. Gomme Ltd, furniture manufacturers, said that in his firm there was close co-operation with textile manufacturers, to ensure that upholstery materials and curtain materials would "keep in step."

E. W. Goodale, CBE, MC, (Warner and Sons Ltd) spoke of co-operation between his firm, as weavers and printers of furnishing fabrics, and carpet manufacturers. He emphasised the value of the Interior Decoration Design Centre, set up by the British Colour Council, in the co-ordination of design trends in the home-furnishing industries.

On consumer research: R. D. Best (Best and Lloyd Ltd, manufacturers of light fittings) said that, at every stage of their development, new designs were seen by the firm's own personnel who freely expressed their opinions on them; and this, he believed, gave a fair indication of what the public's reaction would be.

On catering for overseas markets: Speakers referred to the difficulty of catering for small overseas markets which had design preferences of their own but were not large enough to justify, economically, the production of special designs. Mr Goodale mentioned, however, that in the textile field Australia, New Zealand and also Scandinavia bought largely the same designs as the home market.

As others see us

"Today, nothing can strengthen England's exports against the monotonous masses of products which are churned out by American factories or against the

vivid French fashions so much as the tasteful and well-premeditated production of all different trade sectors, through the co-operation of technicians and well-known artists."

Our Czech contemporary *Tvar* (No. 4/1950) begins, with these words, a commentary on British products, based on a study of the Stock List selections published in *DESIGN*. The critic continues: "Most striking are the style and well-planned bodies of the mechanical implements—the office machines, telephones, optical and measurement apparatus, watches, wireless sets, bodies of cars and railway carriages with their appropriate internal equipment. Less fortunate are the patterns for cloth and the designs in ceramics, which puzzle the reader acquainted with our home level of production. . . . As far as the form and decorations are concerned, the English hand-made pottery uses a style which is half-way between 'historicism and flower-characteristics.'"

In these words our translator does his best with the Czech comment, leaving the English reader slightly puzzled to know whether, on the whole, they are terms of congratulation or opprobrium.

Elegant, tawdry, or superb?

Topography is, perhaps, rather near the limit of *DESIGN*'s territory; but the attention which Barbara Jones gives to buildings and the things inside them, in her new book on *The Isle of Wight*, places this particular piece of topographical writing well on our side of the fence. A King Penguin book (3s), it is a very personal guide to "the Picturesque Beauties of the Isle of Wight." It does not stop short at the end of the Gothic period in architecture, as many formal guide-books still do; nor even with the Georgians, whom the progressive minority of publishers now mention. On the contrary, Barbara Jones's chief interest is in the island's Victoriana—of which she finds many examples. The inn-yard lamp illustrated above is reproduced from one of her drawings, which, in the book, supplement 16 colour plates and a lively text.

Today, no one can take an interest in Victorian things without being aware of the fact that tastes change with time. Barbara Jones reminds her readers of this fact by quoting comments on East



Lamp with clear and ruby glass in the yard of *The Bugle*, Newport—a fine specimen of Isle-of-Wight Victorian (See note below)

Cowes Castle—a large turreted building, designed in 1798 by John Nash—from various earlier guide-books. A writer of 1802 thought the Castle "well worthy of notice"; in 1834, it was considered an "elegant . . . noble structure"; in 1861, "pretentious, parvenu"; and in 1865, "unfortunate . . . tawdry." To bring the record up to date, one can add Barbara Jones's own phrase: she writes of the building's "superb gothic dereliction."

Clifford Barry's cover design for *The Isle of Wight* is worthy of separate comment. In it, one artist complements the work of another. The more pleasant side of Victorianism is recalled by the outside as well as the inside of the book.

Exhibition round-up

This month, a spate of exhibitions, necessarily briefly recorded:

Sculpture in the Home (Arts Council): modern sculpture displayed in a more domestic setting than usual—on and with contemporary furniture selected by the Council of Industrial Design.

Contemporary English Silver (Crafts Centre): mainly work by designer-craftsmen, including several pieces exempt from purchase tax by reason of their high standard of design and craftsmanship.

Leather Goods, Fancy Goods, Personal Accessories (CoID): latest exhibition in the series of products and photographs from the 1951 Stock List; the best-looking yet, both in display and in products displayed.

Contemporary Furnishing Fabrics at Heal's: a small but interesting show, including several Heal fabrics currently on show at the Hambro House of Design, New York.

Danish textiles: at the London showroom of Gray's Carpets & Textiles Ltd, a display of Graucob dress prints and furnishing fabrics now to be sold in the Commonwealth by Grays and soon to be made in this country under licence.

Food Fair (Olympia): first of its kind, thronging with housewives tempted by free samples. Some untidy stand design—with Maconochies among the more notable exceptions.

Radio: at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, for the first time. A smaller but more serious-minded attendance than at London radio shows was able to choose between radio and television sets, all, no doubt, of sound technical design, but of good, bad and indifferent appearance-design.

Commercial Motors (Earl's Court): in lorries and buses, design at its best; in many of the luxury coaches, "styling" at its worst.

More aluminium

At a time when additional uses for aluminium are constantly being found, it is good to know that Britain's output of this versatile metal is to be increased by more than one-third. The additional supplies will come from the Northern Aluminium Company's continuous-strip rolling mill at Rogerstone, near Newport, which was officially opened last month. Its chief products are to be medium-gauge sheet, including corrugated sheet; container sheet; foil stock, and circles for hollow-ware.

The mill covers seven and a half acres, and provision is made for further expansion. Its most impressive features are the extensive use of aluminium in the buildings and equipment; the pleasant



From the tramcar era



The present pattern



London Transport's latest

yet practical colours chosen for machinery, instruments and piping, which contrast well with the natural colour of the metal; and the continuous production lines which run almost the entire length of the factory. Despite the mill's vast size, no detail of design seems to have been overlooked—from the smallest instrument panel to the big cranes which move at high speed above the heads of the workers.

Bus-stopping

Bus-stop signs are among the things of which (revising Sterne) one can say "they manage these things better in London." The London Transport signs in use over the last few years have come in for considerable praise and publicity,* but the latest design is in many respects better still. It consists of a frameless folded sheet of enamelled iron, mounted on a concrete post (with a jaunty red metal tip for its finial) which incorporates a panel for timetables on the side facing the pavement.

The introduction of this new type of sign on 1 October coincided with one stage in the change-over from trams to buses; hence our illustration of a type of tram-sign which soon may be seen no more. Centre, above, is the more familiar type of bus sign now in general use. It has a bronze frame which needs maintenance, and with normal cleaning it is difficult to avoid an accumulation of dirt in the corners.

At present, London Transport has over 30 types of bus- and tram-stop signs in use. The new pattern, designed within the organisation, will be standard for all future replacements—unless, presumably, a still better pattern is introduced before standardisation has been completed.

Anti-dazzle

We quoted, last month, an American criticism of lavish chromium plating on the dashboard of a car, where it acts as a mirror, with reflections which may sometimes be dangerous and are always annoying to the driver. We found homely confirmation of this theory on a Thames water-bus recently: her skipper had made a cardboard mask to slip over his brass instrument-panel, pierced with circular holes through which he could see the dials, while the polished brass around them was covered.

Tailpieces

A letter to the editor of *Plastics*, August 1950 (quoted in the bulletin of the Midland Industrial Designers' Association):

SIR: We are needing a quantity of imitation candle drips for use with our wrought iron fittings. We shall be glad to learn of a source of supply...

A comment from the *Manchester Guardian*:

A large city store... is currently selling, on the same counter, Ladies' Vests for 3s 10½d, and Women's Vests for 3s 10d.



From this control cabin in the Northern Aluminium Company's new continuous-strip rolling mill, the third-of-a-mile-long "hot-line," where the strip is coiled, can be seen. The cabin is itself an instance of the many uses of aluminium in the factory

* In, for example, *Transport World*, January 1944; *Architects' Journal*, 23 March 1944; *Art & Industry*, October 1946.

New books

Decorative Art 1950-51, edited by Rathbone Holme and Kathleen Frost (The Studio Ltd, 25s)

Latest edition of the Studio year-book has over 400 illustrations, including 16 in colour. Interiors and furniture from Australia, N America, S Africa, Scandinavia, France, Austria and Germany—as well as Britain—are represented.

Design Course for Furniture Salesmen (Council of Industrial Design, 6d)

Though nominally a report of the course held at Attingham last spring, this document includes material of more permanent value—especially a paper by David Pye on "The Technique of Making Furniture by Machine" which, with diagrams, occupies 15 pages.

People and their Homes, by Dr Dennis Chapman ("Current Affairs," No 108; Bureau of Current Affairs, 9d)

Dr Chapman, now lecturer in social science at Liverpool University, was formerly in the furniture trade. In this pamphlet he examines "some of the factors which influence people in selecting and arranging their furniture."

Old Silver for Modern Settings, by Edward Wenham (G. Bell & Sons Ltd, 21s).

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The Outline of Art, edited by Sir William Orpen; 1950 edition revised by Horace Shipp (Geo. Newnes, 30s)

Two Centuries of British Water-colour Painting, by Adrian Bury (Geo. Newnes, 63s)

Two well printed and heavily illustrated books on the fine arts.

Packaging (Anglo-American Council on Productivity, 2s 6d). Report of a specialist team which visited the USA in 1949-50.

Fabrics in the Home, by Roger Smithells (Herbert Jenkins, 25s).

30 Crafts, edited by Mavis Fitzrandolph for The National Federation of Women's Institutes. (Adprint, 6s).

Printed English, by Henry Jacob (Sylvan Press, 8s 6d)

A most useful book for typographers, editors and anyone concerned with setting a house style in printed matter.

Drawings of British Plants, by Stella Ross-Craig (Part IV; G. Bell and Sons Ltd, 5s)

Line drawings, finely printed; part of "a standard set of illustrations of all the thoroughly established flowering plants growing wild in the British Isles."

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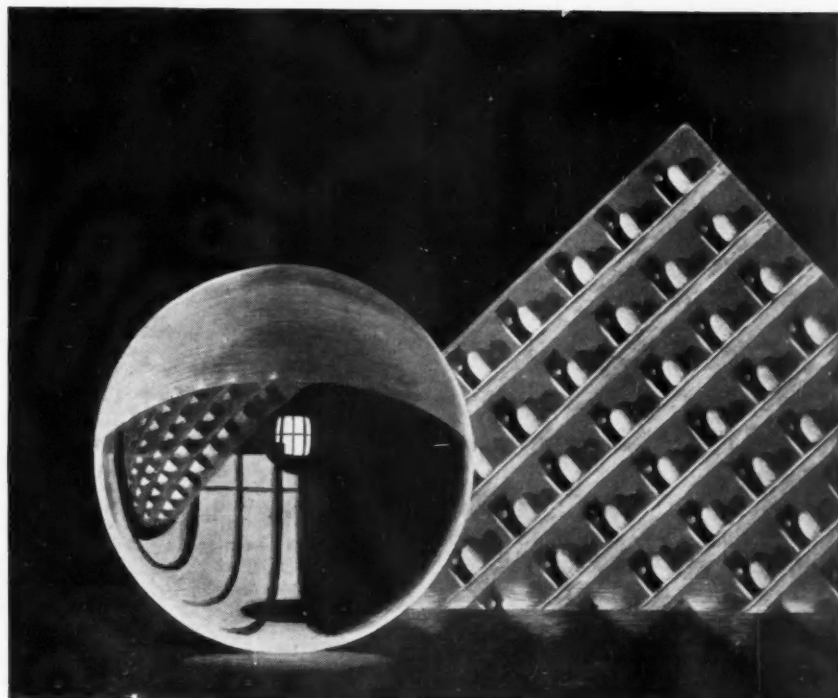
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